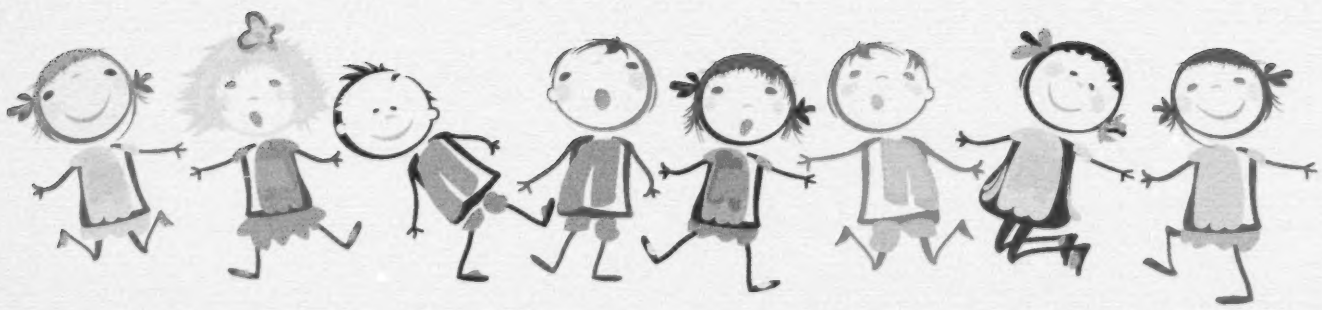
REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

2014/15 Annual Report
and
2015/16–2016/17 Service Plan



Sept. 28, 2015

The Honourable Linda Reid
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Suite 207, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the *2014/15 Annual Report and the 2015/16 to 2016/17 Service Plan* of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to the Legislative Assembly.

This document reports on the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015 and covers activities underway and planned for the period April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2017, and has been prepared in accordance with part 5, sections 17 and 19 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act.*

Yours sincerely,

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
Representative for Children and Youth
Province of British Columbia

pc: Mr. Craig James
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Ms. Jane Thornthwaite, MLA
Chair, Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Message from the Representative

The *Annual Report and Service Plan* which follows will show that 2014/15 was the busiest year ever for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth in British Columbia.

Not only did the Office deal with 2,013 advocacy cases – a single-year record since our inception in 2007 – but we also issued a total of 10 public reports recommending key improvements to the child- and youth-serving system in the province and detailing our review and investigation work regarding critical injuries and deaths of B.C. children and youth.

Our Advocacy program – one of three main functions of the Representative's Office – helped more children and families than ever before with advice, information and assistance while also advocating for larger changes within the complex system of services to children, youth and young adults in B.C. Our advocates continued to work out of three offices – in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George – while serving people across the province.

In addition to working with individual children, youth and their caregivers, advocates undertook a major public awareness campaign in 2014/15, partnering with the Public Guardian and Trustee and the Federation of B.C. Youth in Care Networks. As part of the "Plan Your Path" tour designed to help young people in B.C. to learn and understand their rights, RCY advocates and partners began an effort to visit 20 communities, reaching 225 children and youth, during an extensive outreach to Aboriginal communities.

Creating greater awareness of our Office and the services it provides continues to be a major

The Representative

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond was appointed to a five-year term as B.C.'s first Representative for Children and Youth in November 2006 and reappointed in November 2011 to a second term extending to Nov. 26, 2016.

Turpel-Lafond's career has focused on the well-being of vulnerable children and youth. She is a judge on leave from the Saskatchewan Provincial Court where she worked as a criminal law judge in youth and adult courts, with an emphasis on developing partnerships to better serve the needs of young people in the justice system.

She holds a doctorate of law from Harvard Law School and a master's degree in international law from Cambridge University.

A member of Saskatchewan's Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Turpel-Lafond and her husband, George Lafond, have four children.

focus. In this regard, the Representative's Office introduced a ground-breaking mobile app, "Rep4Rights", offering advocacy information and tips for young people, and also launched a new, more responsive and mobile-friendly website that has seen visitors to www.rcybc.ca increase six-fold since June 2014. The Representative's Office continues to expand its reach on social media, as well, launching a youth Twitter feed in 2014/15. Plans for outgoing years call for further expansion on that front, including the incorporation of youth members onto the Representative's social media team.

Continued intense focus on Aboriginal children and youth receiving services as well as their families also remains a key priority as this group is vastly over-represented in the care system compared to its non-Aboriginal counterparts. In 2014/15, the Representative's Office created the position of Director, Aboriginal Initiatives, to further enhance leadership across the organization in support of this work.

Our Monitoring program continued to research and review government-funded services to children and youth in 2014/15 as the Representative's Office issued a total of four Monitoring reports. Two of them – *Finding Forever Families (June)* and *B.C. Adoptions Update (November)* – dealt with the topic of permanency, revealing that adoptive placements of children in care have been declining and that, at any given time, more than 1,000 children in care are waiting for adoption. To help address this issue, the Representative's Office teamed with the Ministry of Children and Family Development in a commitment to significantly increase the adoption rates for B.C. children in care. To that end, the Representative's Office played a role in initiating a major social media campaign in the fall of 2014. While the numbers of placements have not yet risen as significantly as we would like, the Representative's Office will continue its focus on permanency and adoptions – particularly for Aboriginal children – in the coming years.

The Monitoring report *On their Own (April 2014)* examined the needs of B.C. youth as they leave government care and concluded that more needs to be done for such youth after they turn 19 and "age out" of care. The report recommended that government consider policy and legislative changes to assist and support youth as they transition out of care, and that care for some youth be extended up to age 25, on a case-by-case basis. In connection with this effort, the Representative continued her push for post-secondary supports for former youth in care – efforts that have contributed to a growing number of B.C. institutions now offering tuition breaks for such students – and the continued development of an endowment fund to help such youth with expenses beyond tuition.

The final Monitoring report was *Not Fully Invested (October)*, which tracked and reported out on past recommendations made by the Representative's Office to help vulnerable children in B.C. This report showed that while 72 per cent of the recommendations have been acted upon, a number of the most important ones have been ignored – in particular the recommendations calling for significant cross-ministry involvement and collaboration.

In addition, we discovered that the number of children and youth in care (CYIC) has dropped substantially since last year's annual report. On Sept. 17, 2015, MCFD confirmed it had over-counted the number of CYIC by approximately 1,000. While I am pleased that the ministry has corrected long-standing inaccuracies in data, I am investigating this further to discover who the over-counted youth were and what, ultimately, happened to them.

Message from the Representative

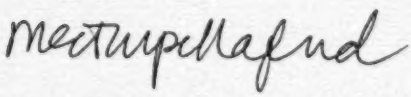
The Representative's Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations (CID) program continued its work in 2014/15, conducting reviews and undertaking investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services from government. This important function is conducted in order to ensure that lessons are learned and that recommendations are made to prevent similar injuries and deaths in the future.

In 2014/15, the CID team completed two investigations and issued the reports *Children at Risk (June)* and *Who Cares? (December)*. *Children at Risk* examined the circumstances of a young boy who suffered serious injuries in a motor vehicle accident due to the fact he had been left unsupervised in the care of his mother and her boyfriend who had substance use issues and who had been drinking on the day of the accident. Among the report's recommendations were that MCFD conduct timely assessments of a child's needs and the capacity of those providing care to meet them and also to make substance-use consultants available to assist social workers dealing with this complex area of practice.

Who Cares? – an aggregate review of 31 critical injuries and deaths of children in care – showed that young people in B.C. continue to be placed in inappropriate residential placements, sometimes with tragic results. Among the report's recommendations was the creation of a new class of foster and shared care that would permit a continuing role for parents, even in circumstances when they cannot care for their child. It also recommended an oversight body be created and regular audits conducted of contractors providing residential care services on behalf of MCFD.

This document outlines the approach to meeting my accountability to the public and the Legislature to report on the activities of my Office and plans for future years. It describes the activities of the Office during 2014/15 as well as outlines our planned strategic initiatives for 2015/16 and 2016/17. It provides a full and comprehensive picture of the Office's accomplishments over the past reporting period, our plans for future years and how our work to achieve our mandate, vision and goals will be measured.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, *Representative for Children and Youth*
September 2015

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth was established in April 2007 with the proclamation of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCY Act)*. The creation of this Office was a central recommendation of the Hon. Ted Hughes in his April 2006 *BC Child and Youth Review: An Independent Review of BC's Child Protection System* (Hughes Review).

The Representative for Children and Youth is responsible for supporting children, youth, young adults and their families who need help in dealing with the child- and youth-serving system, for advocating for improvements to the system and for providing oversight of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and other public bodies that deliver services and programs to children and youth.

Representative's Mandate

The Representative for Children and Youth has a three-fold mandate:

- *Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations* – conducting reviews and undertaking investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services to identify and make recommendations for improvements to services to prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.
- *Advocacy* – providing information, advice and assistance to children, youth, young adults and their families who need help in dealing with designated or prescribed services or programs provided or funded by government, and promoting and facilitating the development of advocacy services within communities.
- *Monitoring* – undertaking research, review, evaluation and audit of government-funded services and programs to identify and make recommendations for change to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of these services.

Reviewable services are services provided under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and the *Youth Justice Act*; mental health and addiction services for children; and additional designated services which include but are not limited to family support, adoption, guardianship, services for children and youth with disabilities, early childhood development and child care services and services for youth in their transition to adulthood.

Review of Mandate

Under s. 30 of the *RCY Act*, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY) was required by April 1, 2015 to undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of s. 6 (1) (b) of the *Act* – the Representative's responsibility to *"monitor, review, audit and conduct research on the provision of a designated service by a public body or director for the purpose of making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of that service, and comment publicly on any of these functions".* (This is in addition to the comprehensive review of the *Act* required by April 1, 2017, and once every five years after that, to determine whether the functions of the Representative described in s. 6 are still required to ensure that the needs of children and young adults as defined in that section are met.)

On March 26, 2015, the SSCCY recommended in a report to the Legislative Assembly that s. 6(1)(b) of the *RCY Act* not be amended at that time; the SSCCY noted that there would be a further opportunity to review this section during the next statutory review of the *Act* to occur before April 1, 2017. The Legislative Assembly accepted the report of the SSCCY.

Representative's Mandate (*Representative for Children and Youth Act*, s. 6)

6 (1) The representative is responsible for performing the following functions in accordance with this Act:

(a) support, assist, inform and advise children and their families respecting designated services, which activities include, without limitation,

(i) providing information and advice to children and their families about how to effectively access designated services and how to become effective self advocates with respect to those services,

(ii) advocating on behalf of a child receiving or eligible to receive a designated service, and

(iii) supporting, promoting in communities and commenting publicly on advocacy services for children and their families with respect to designated services;

(a.1) support, assist, inform and advise young adults and their families respecting prescribed services and programs, which activities include, without limitation,

(i) providing information and advice to young adults and their families about how to effectively access prescribed services and programs and how to become effective self advocates with respect to those services and programs,

(ii) advocating on behalf of a young adult receiving or eligible to receive a prescribed service or program, and

(iii) supporting, promoting in communities and commenting publicly on advocacy services for young adults and their families with respect to services;

(b) monitor, review, audit and conduct research on the provision of a designated service by a public body or director for the purpose of making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of that service, and comment publicly on any of these functions;

(c) review, investigate and report on the critical injuries and deaths of children as set out in Part 4;

(d) perform any other prescribed functions.

(2) In this section, "young adult" means a person who

(a) is 19 years of age or older but is under 24 years of age, and

(b) received a reviewable service within 15 months before the person's 19th birthday.

Our Vision

An organization highly valued for championing the fundamental rights of children and youth and for promoting improvements in services that result in better lives for vulnerable children and youth

Our Goals

1. Advocacy supports vulnerable children, youth and young adults in having their rights and interests protected and upheld, their voices heard and considered, and in being active participants in decisions affecting them.
2. The identification of opportunities for strengthening the child- and youth-serving system improves outcomes for vulnerable children and youth and the quality of services provided to them.
3. The examination of critical injuries and deaths contributes to ensuring that children and youth are safe from violence, abuse and neglect, and exposure to violence.
4. Effective operations and practices and an expert, competent and diverse staff enhance the capacity of the Office to meet its mandate.

Our Principles

- *Independence* – the independence of the Representative is enshrined in the *RCY Act* that establishes the Representative as an independent officer of the Legislature. The Representative and her staff ensure and maintain this independence by carrying out their duties and functions in an open, objective and impartial manner using an evaluative and evidence-based approach.
- *Accountability* – the Representative is accountable to British Columbians for the performance of her responsibilities and duties in advocating for children, youth and young adults and for providing oversight to the child- and youth-serving system. The Representative reports publicly and to the Legislature through the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth.
- *Child- and Youth-Centred* – children and youth and their best interests are at the centre of the work of the Office. At its core, a child- and youth-centred focus is based on the rights and interests of children and youth being the predominant consideration in providing advocacy support and in evaluating the impact, and the responsiveness and effectiveness of child- and youth-serving programs and services.

Our Values

To ensure the effectiveness of the Office, the Representative and her staff meet high standards of ethical and professional conduct and are guided by the values of:

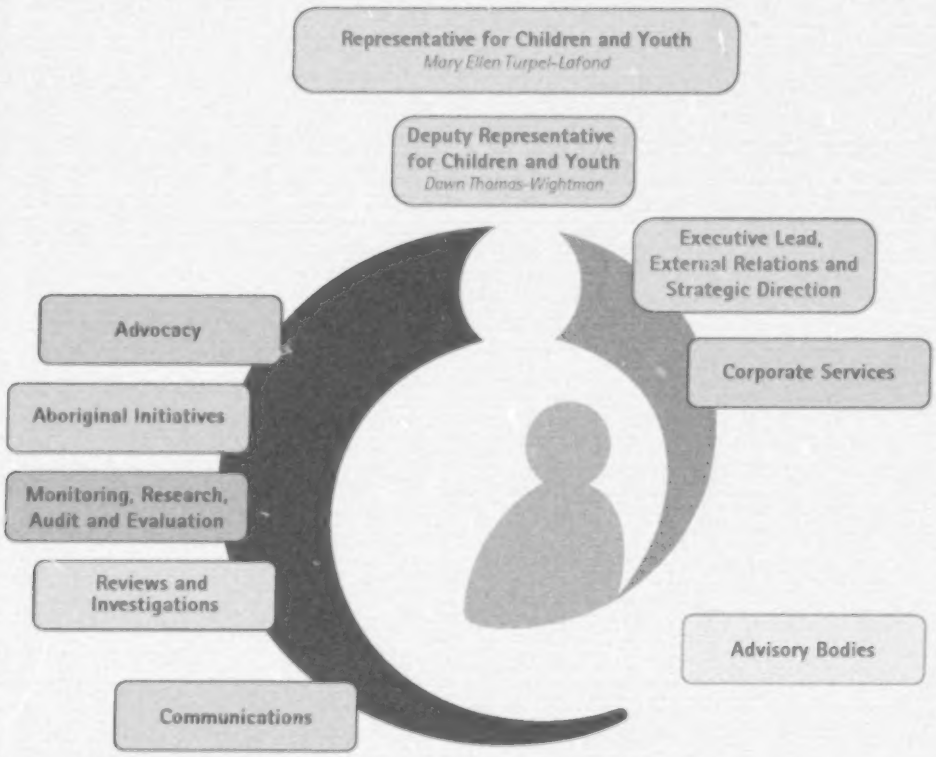
- *Respect* – through acceptance of differing views and approaches, and, in interactions with children, youth and young adults, being accessible and easy to approach, calm and helpful;
- *Integrity* – through honest, open, trustworthy and unbiased and consistent conduct;
- *Fairness* – by ensuring that anyone impacted by the work of the Office has the opportunity to be heard and their views considered;
- *Critical Thinking* – through a measured, evaluative and evidence-based approach; and
- *Collaboration* – by working with others to build a greater understanding of the B.C. child- and youth-serving system and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Organization

The Office is organized into four program areas – Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations; Monitoring, Research, Evaluation and Audit; Advocacy, Community Relations and Youth Engagement; and Aboriginal Initiatives. These four program areas are supported by Communications and Corporate Services.

Programs are delivered from offices located in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George. Advocacy, Community Relations and Youth Engagement staff are based in all three locations. Critical Injury and Death Review and Investigation; Monitoring, Research, Evaluation and Audit; and Communications and Corporate Services staff are located in the Victoria office. Aboriginal Initiatives is based in the Burnaby office.

Staff come from diverse educational, employment and cultural backgrounds. The importance of ensuring an Aboriginal perspective in the work of the Representative's Office is demonstrated through Aboriginal leaders on the senior staff team. Employees come from backgrounds in law, social work, education, youth justice, child and youth mental health, community-based and public sector advocacy, law enforcement and justice administration and social policy research and analysis.



Working with Others

The Representative is part of two collaborative bodies:

- *The Children's Forum* – recommended by the Hughes Review and established in 2007, the Forum, chaired by the Representative through March 31, 2015, is composed of delegates from the Chief Coroner, the Ombudsperson, the Public Guardian and Trustee, the Provincial Health Officer and senior leaders from MCFD. The Forum offers an opportunity for discussion and collaboration on matters of common interest to improve services to vulnerable children and youth in B.C.
- *The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)* – an alliance of the 11 provincial and territorial children's advocates from across Canada that informs governments and the public about children's rights, and the status and well-being of vulnerable children and youth on a national level.

The Advisory Committee on Services to Special Needs Children and Youth, comprised of individuals who have specialized knowledge or experience with services to children and youth with special needs, provides the Representative with valuable advice about current issues, and helps inform the Representative's reports on related matters.

In spring 2013, the Representative challenged B.C.'s post-secondary institutions to waive tuition fees for former youth in care in order to make post-secondary education more accessible to them. Vancouver Island University was the first institution to meet this challenge, followed by the University of British Columbia. As of the 2014/15 academic year, 10 post-secondary institutions offered a tuition-waiver program to more than 80 B.C. students who were former youth in care. The Representative continues to meet with and connect educators and business leaders to find new ways to support the education of youth in care. This includes partnering with Coast Capital Savings and the provincial government to develop a fund to help support the living expenses for former foster children taking post-secondary education.

Reporting

The Representative reports to an all-party committee of the Legislature, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY). The SSCCY was recommended by the Hughes Review and established under the *RCY Act*. The SSCCY is responsible for fostering awareness and understanding among legislators and the public about the B.C. child welfare system. The Representative meets regularly with the SSCCY to present her reports and discuss the activities of her Office.

Under the *RCY Act*, by Sept. 30 of each year, the Representative is required to submit an Annual Report and Service Plan to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, who lays the reports before the Legislative Assembly. The Service Plan must also be tabled with the SSCCY. This combined Annual Report/Service Plan document reports on the Representative's work over the past fiscal year including the attainment of performance measures with actual results compared against expected results and highlighting the strategic initiatives underway and planned over the next two-year period.

The Context for the Representative's Work

Vulnerable Children and Youth

The focus of the Representative's work is children and youth who are vulnerable due to their individual needs or life circumstances.

Some children, youth and young adults and their families require extra supports and services to address special needs and to help parents and families in caring for their children. For others, government programs, including various interventions, are required to ensure a child's health, safety and well-being.

In 2014, MCFD provided services and programs to about 155,000 individual children and youth and their families[1] or 17 per cent of the estimated 894,000 children between the age of birth and 18 years living in B.C.[2] Programs included early childhood development and child care services, child and youth mental health services, services for children and youth with special needs, youth justice services, child safety and family support and children in care services and adoption services. MCFD receives and responds to about 37,000 protection reports annually.[3]

A particularly vulnerable group of children and youth, warranting special attention includes children and youth living outside the parental home, either in the care of the Province with a caregiver supported by an MCFD or Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) program (e.g., Extended Family Program, Out of Care Options, Child in the Home of a Relative, Child Out of Parental Home Program), or youth living on their own under an MCFD Youth Agreement. Of this group of about 11,278 children and youth, 7,630 were children and youth in care (CYIC) of the Province, including 3,988 under a Continuing Custody Order (CCO) with government having permanent care and responsibility for the child.[4]

[1] MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 4, March 2014
[2] BC Stats, 2014
[3] MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 4, March 2014
[4] MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse

Figure 1 – Children living out of the parental home

Children Living Out of the Parental Home (as of March 31, 2015)					
Children and Youth in Care (CYIC)	Extended Family Program	Out of Care Options	Youth Agreements	Children in the Home of a Relative (CIHR)	Child Out of Parental Home Program (COPH)
7,630	420	486	685	1,565	492

Note regarding CYIC data in Figure 1:

The reported number of CYIC has dropped substantially since last year's annual report. This is due to changes in MCFD's Corporate Data Warehouse.

On June 23, 2015, MCFD notified the Representative's Office that the reason it had shut down its Corporate Data Warehouse in December 2014 was to address an over-count of CYIC due to incomplete information and data entry/coding errors in the Integrated Case Management (ICM) computer system. On Aug. 13, 2015, MCFD advised the Representative of updates to its Corporate Data Warehouse including to data on CYIC that had not been updated since December 2014.

In making a comparison between last year's annual report statistics for March 31, 2014 and March 31, 2015, there has been a drop in the number of CYIC of about 540, from 8,169 to 7,630. In making an initial comparison between the number of CYIC as of November 2014 (using the "old" or "not cleaned" data) to most currently available data for July 2015 (using the "new" or "cleaned" data), the Representative notes that the number of CYIC has dropped by about 1,000.

Staff of the Representative's office received a briefing on the results of the data clean-up exercise on Sept. 17, 2015, which confirmed that MCFD over-counted the number of children in care by approximately 1,000. The clean-up resulted in approximately 600 duplicate files being removed from the system and an adjustment to the caseloads back to 2002. Another 400 files were closed due to out of date legal codes. In total, over one thousand expired legal orders were updated in the system by social workers as part of the clean-up initiative.

While the Representative is pleased that MCFD has corrected long-standing inaccuracies in its data, she is concerned about the difficulty this creates with respect to properly monitoring trends in the actual numbers of CYIC over time. Correcting data inaccuracies is essential for producing accurate counts of the numbers of children and youth in MCFD's legal care as per the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. The RCY will continue to monitor changes in CYIC numbers, either due to changes with the ICM computer system or with the Corporate Data Warehouse in order to better understand trends in the numbers of CYIC. In addition, the Representative will investigate further to discover who the over-counted youth were and what, ultimately, happened to them.

Note regarding CIHR and COPH in Figure 1:

The provincial CIHR program stopped accepting applications on March 31, 2010. In line with the winding down of the CIHR program, the federal COPH program stopped accepting new applications as of March 31, 2012. As a result, the number of children covered by both programs has dropped significantly – as of March 31, 2015 there were 1,565 children covered in MCFD's CIHR program, down from 4,494 children as of March 31, 2010 and as of March 31, 2015 there were 492 children covered by AANDC's COPH program, down from 1,220 children as of March 31, 2012. The Representative is concerned that elimination of both the provincial CIHR and federal COPH programs means that extended family members may not be receiving the financial supports they need to look after a relative's child.

Children and youth in care have poorer health and safety, education and well-being outcomes than children and youth not in care. This extends into adulthood with many of the approximately 700 youth who reach 19 years of age and leave government care each year facing significant challenges to make it on their own.

Ongoing monitoring of the government's system of services and supports to vulnerable children and youth, especially children and youth in care, is needed in order to understand how effective and responsive these services are and how they contribute to and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and the overall health and well-being of B.C.'s children and youth.

- For all students entering Grade 8 in 2007/08, 41.5 per cent of students with a CCO progressed from Grade 8 to Grade 12 completion as compared to 88.3 per cent of students without a CCO *(Source: data collected as part of preparation of 2015 Growing Up in B.C. report)*
- Youth who have ever been in government care were significantly more likely to have either considered suicide or to have attempted suicide compared to youth who were never in care *(Source: data collected as part of preparation of 2015 Growing Up in B.C. report)*
- Overall, youth who had ever been in government care were significantly more likely to indicate being a victim or perpetrator of bullying at school or on the way to or from school compared to youth who were never in care *(Source: data collected as part of preparation of 2015 Growing Up in B.C. report)*
- Within six months of aging out of care, about 50 per cent of former youth in care in 2012/13 were on some form of income assistance *(Source: MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 4, March 2014)*

Special Attention to Aboriginal Children and Youth

Aboriginal children and youth are over-represented in the child welfare system and under-represented in many supportive services.

Although there has been a decline overall in the number of children and youth in care over the past decade, Aboriginal children and youth continue to be disproportionately represented. Only eight per cent of children and youth in B.C. are Aboriginal but, as of March 2015, about 57 per cent of children and youth in care and 66 per cent of children and youth under a CCO were Aboriginal.[5] Child welfare services to support Aboriginal children, youth and their families are often insufficient or inappropriate and there is a disparity in access to, and adequacy of, services for Aboriginal children, youth and families living on-reserve.

Aboriginal children and youth are far more likely to come into contact with the child welfare system and about 12 times more likely to come into care than non-Aboriginal children.

(Source: data collected as part of preparation of 2015 Growing Up in B.C. report)

In 2012/13, 44.3 per cent of Aboriginal youth in care had completed high school at 19 years of age, compared to 50.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal youth in care.

(Source: MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 4, March 2014)

Many Aboriginal children and youth in B.C. experience poorer health, education and socio-economic outcomes than their non-Aboriginal peers. And the poorer outcomes experienced by children and youth involved in the child welfare system are even more pronounced for Aboriginal children and youth in care.

Special attention to monitoring the services to Aboriginal children and youth and identifying ways services and programs can be improved to better meet the needs of Aboriginal children, youth and their families and improve outcomes is therefore critical.

[5] MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Programs and Activities – Highlights and Strategic Initiatives

Critical Injury and Deaths – Reviews and Investigations

In the tragic event that a child or youth involved in the child- and youth-serving system suffers a critical injury or dies, the Representative is responsible for reviewing the incident. The goal is to understand the circumstances of the injury or death and, where appropriate, make recommendations for improvements to service, practice or policy to help prevent the reoccurrence of such tragedies.

The Review and Investigation Process

The child injury and death review and investigation process is multi-layered and designed to ensure due diligence in meeting the Representative's mandate for child critical injury and death review and investigation:

- *Reporting* – Public bodies report to the Representative the critical injury or death of a child or youth who had at any time in the previous year received reviewable services from them.
- *Screening* – Each report is screened against established criteria to determine if service-delivery issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury. When such concerns are identified, the case becomes the subject of a more intensive review.

  In about 50 per cent of cases, no service-delivery issues are identified. These include situations where, for example, the child was medically fragile and the death was expected, or the cause was clearly accidental. Some of these cases may be flagged for inclusion in an aggregate review, which is designed to identify broad trends and patterns that can inform improvements to the child- and youth-serving system.
- *Review* – Where service-delivery issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury, the case is reviewed to determine if it warrants a full investigation. The review is comprehensive and involves the analysis of information in files of the public body and any related policies and standards, and any relevant files from police departments, health care providers, contracted service providers and others involved with the child or family. Consultation with the B.C. Coroners Service and discussions with service providers or caregivers may also be undertaken as part of the review process.

  Only a small number of cases reviewed are selected for full investigation at the Representative's discretion based on a determination that the circumstances are suspicious, the death or critical injury was self-inflicted or inflicted by someone else, and evidence that abuse or neglect may have been a factor or services the child or family received may have played a part in contributing to circumstances in which the injury or death occurred.

- *Investigation* – A full investigation involves a thorough and rigorous examination of the system of supports and services the child or youth received up to and including the time of the death or injury. The Representative's investigation team collects evidence and reviews all case-related records along with relevant legislation, policies and standards and typically interviews numerous individuals under oath. Where the investigation involves an Aboriginal child or youth, community members and leaders are engaged to ensure that their voices are heard and that unique history and issues are taken into consideration. Subject matter experts may be retained to provide specific knowledge and expertise as needed (for example, a case involving a child with special needs or a significant medical condition).

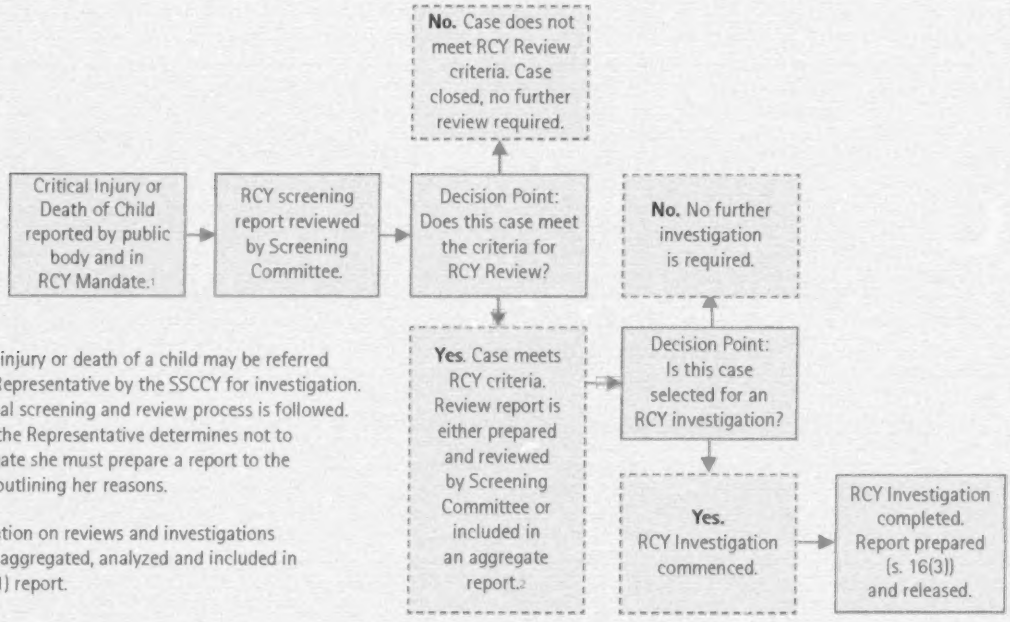
A Multidisciplinary Team, bringing together expertise from law enforcement, the Coroners Service, injury research prevention, pediatric medicine, child maltreatment/child protection specialists and Aboriginal child welfare leaders, supports the Representative in reviewing evidence and analyzing information gained through reviews and investigations.

The Representative may prepare public reports aggregating and analyzing information obtained through reviews and investigations (s. 16(1) *RCY Act*). The Representative must prepare a report on the investigation of a critical injury or death of a child (s. 16(3) *RCY Act*). Reviews and investigation reports are submitted to the SSCCY and made publicly available. The Representative may also prepare and issue a special report based on her review and investigation work on a matter or case illustrating an issue that the Representative believes should be reported to the Legislature and the public (s. 20, *RCY Act*).

Draft reports are sent on a confidential basis to those organizations and individuals who have been interviewed or are otherwise affected so that they can identify errors or omissions for administrative fairness purposes. This input is considered in developing the final report to be publicly released.

A critical injury or death of a child may also be referred to the Representative by the SSCCY. The usual screening and review process is followed. Where the Representative determines to investigate a critical injury or death of child referred to her by the SSCCY, an investigation report is completed. Where the Representative determines not to investigate the critical injury or death of a child referred to her by the SSCCY, she must prepare a report to the SSCCY outlining her reason. There were no such referrals in 2014/15.

Process Flow – Reviews and Investigations


No. Case does not meet RCY Review criteria. Case closed, no further review required.
Critical Injury or Death of Child reported by public body and in RCY Mandate.1
RCY screening report reviewed by Screening Committee.
Decision Point: Does this case meet the criteria for RCY Review?
No. No further investigation is required.
Yes. Case meets RCY criteria. Review report is either prepared and reviewed by Screening Committee or included in an aggregate report.2
Decision Point: Is this case selected for an RCY investigation?
Yes. RCY Investigation commenced.
RCY Investigation completed. Report prepared (s. 16(3)) and released.

1 Critical injury or death of a child may be referred to the Representative by the SSCCY for investigation. The usual screening and review process is followed. Where the Representative determines not to investigate she must prepare a report to the SSCCY outlining her reasons.

2 Information on reviews and investigations may be aggregated, analyzed and included in a s. 16(1) report.

Highlights of 2014/15 Activities

Critical Injuries and Deaths Reports, Reviews and Trends

Between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, 82 deaths and 294 critical injuries of children and youth were reported to the Representative's Office. Based on initial screening of reports, a total of 244 cases – 25 deaths and 219 critical injuries – met the criteria for further review.

Figure 2 – Reports and Reviews 2009/10 to 2014/15

Reports and Reviews												
	Reported to RCY						Selected for Review					
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Critical Injuries	137	136	413	300	318	292	63	82	237	193	229	217
Deaths	93	88	101	100	99	82	37	34	29	32	32	25
Total	230	224	514	400	417	374	100	116	266	225	261	242

Figure 3, below, shows that almost 60 per cent of the cases of critical injury and death selected for review involved Aboriginal children and youth, which reflects the over-representation of Aboriginal children and youth in the child welfare system.

Figure 3 – Further Detail on Cases Selected for Review 2014/15

Cases Selected for Review				
	Critical Injuries		Deaths	
	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal
Not in Care	21	14	12	10
In Care	67	115	3	0
Total	88	129	15	10

Figures 4 and 5 provide detail on the causes of critical injuries and deaths reviewed, as well as the distribution by gender of critical injuries and death.

Figure 4 – Number of Critical Injuries by Category and Gender 2014/15

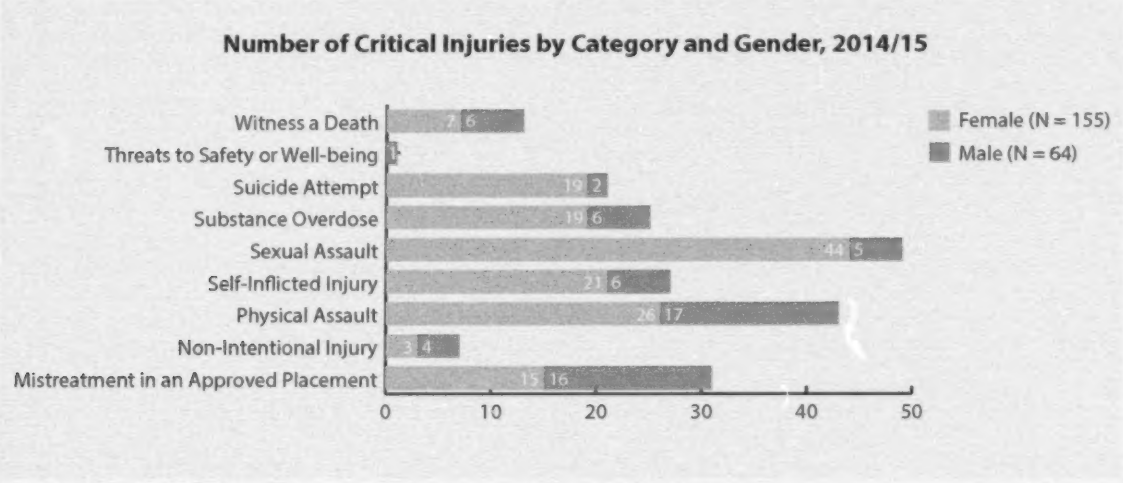


Figure 5 – Number of Deaths by Category and Gender 2014/15

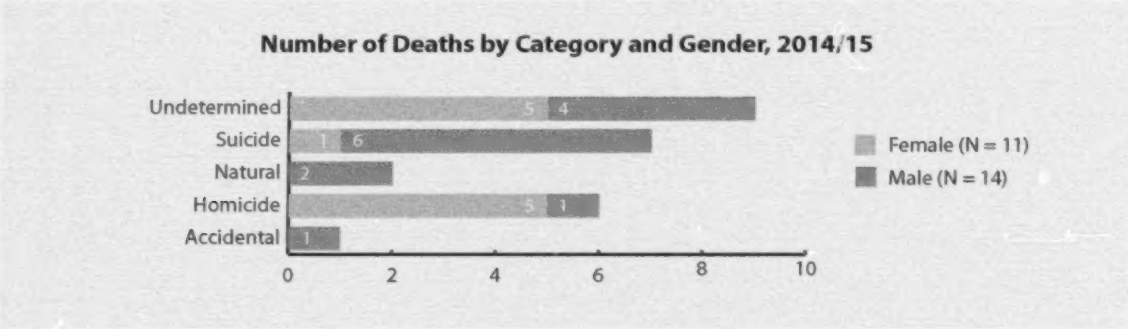
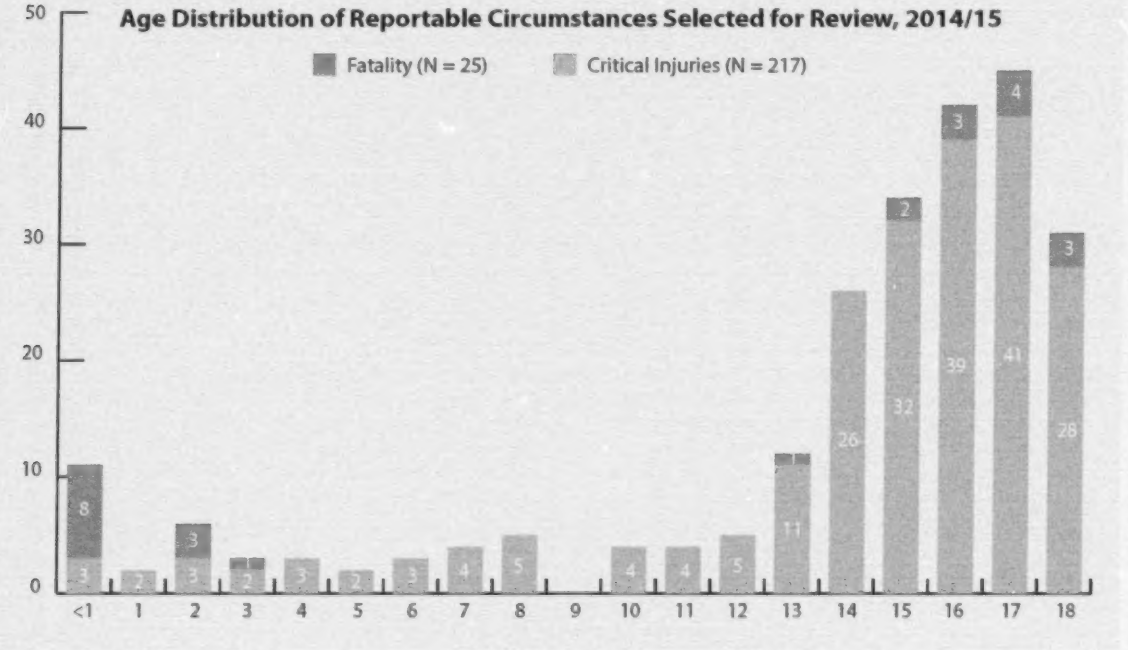


Figure 6 shows the age distribution of the cases of critical injury or death reported to the Representative and reviewed. Consistent with historical trends, there are spikes in the number of critical injuries and deaths for infants and teenagers that are associated with the particular vulnerabilities of those groups. Infants are dependent on their caregivers, and teenagers are prone to engage in high-risk behaviours.

Figure 6 – Age Distribution of Critical Injury or Deaths Reported to the Representative



Investigations in 2014/2015

June 24, 2014, *Children at Risk: The Case for a Better Response to Parental Addiction*

This investigation examined the circumstances of a young boy who suffered serious head and spinal injuries in a motor vehicle accident, the result of being left unsupervised with his mother and her boyfriend, who had both been drinking prior to the accident. MCFD safety planning for the child proved inadequate, and placed an unfair burden on the maternal grandparents to deal objectively with the risk that their daughter's addictions posed to the child.

The report recommended a focus on the best interests of the child, with specialist substance use consultants to be made available to assist social workers dealing with this complex area of practice, along with the creation of a comprehensive addictions strategy. The report also recommended timely assessment of a child's needs and the capacity of relatives to meet those needs when the child is placed in their care.

December 10, 2014, *Who Cares? B.C. Children with Complex Medical, Psychological and Developmental Needs and their Families Deserve Better*

This report, an aggregate review of 31 critical injuries and deaths of children in care, demonstrated that young people in B.C. continue to be placed in inappropriate residential placements, sometimes with tragic results. The report recommended creation of a new class of foster and shared care that would permit a continuing role for parents, even in circumstances when they could not care for their child.

The report highlighted the lack of assessment, treatment and planning provided to youth with complex needs and the resulting negative outcomes. It also recommended the creation of an oversight body with broad representation and regular audits of contractors providing residential care services.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2015/16 and 2016/17

An aggregate review of the sexual victimization of children and youth while in the care of MCFD or while receiving reviewable services is underway, involving the analysis of more than 100 cases. The review is focused on the systemic response to these crimes and how supports for this vulnerable population can be strengthened.

Two investigations are also currently underway – one focusing on the circumstances of a young woman whose substance use and high-risk behaviours have challenged the capacity of our child-serving system; and the other related to the death of an Aboriginal youth who had been struggling with mental illness. A number of other cases are currently under active review and at least one further investigation will commence in the 2015 calendar year.

Because of increased awareness and enhanced training provided to MCFD staff, the volume of reports of injuries and deaths to the Representative's Office has more than tripled – placing enormous demands on the Office's capacity to carefully screen and review each incident. Efforts to streamline internal processes are currently underway.

Monitoring, Research, Evaluation and Audit

Monitoring Process

The Monitoring, Research, Evaluation and Audit program supports the Representative in meeting her responsibility to monitor and evaluate government-funded child and youth services for the purpose of making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of those services. The Representative reports publicly on these activities, including issuing reports on the implementation of recommendations.

The work of the Monitoring program is carried out in three ways:

- *Oversight* – monitoring government's activities and its performance in providing services to children, youth and their families, including assessing services against evidence-based research and best practice. The Monitoring team also tracks key service delivery issues and assesses government's progress towards addressing those issues.
- *Research and Evaluation* – undertaking evidence-based research, analysis and evaluation, including collaboration with other independent bodies and research institutions, to identify well-being outcomes of vulnerable children and youth and to inform how these can be improved.
- *Review and Audit* – conducting reviews and audits to assess the effectiveness and responsiveness of programs and services to children, youth and their families. This includes measuring compliance with standards, policies and legislation; gauging the adequacy of ministry quality assurance activities; and undertaking assessments of specific programs or particular pieces of the system of services to determine how the needs of children and families are being met.

In undertaking this Monitoring function, the Representative's primary goal is to contribute to a better understanding of the issues at hand and to make recommendations that will improve service delivery and results in the areas of safety, health, education and well-being for vulnerable children and youth.

Highlights of 2014/15 Activities

Monitoring and Special Reports in 2014/15

April 28, 2014, *On Their Own: Examining the Needs of B.C. Youth as They Leave Government Care*

This report concluded that government's responsibility for youth in care does not suddenly end when the youth turns 19 years of age. Government has a continuing responsibility to provide targeted supports to youth leaving care well beyond their 19th birthday to ensure that they have the same supports and opportunities as their peers. The Representative recommended that government consider policy and legislative changes to assist and support youth as they transition out of care, including amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* to permit, on a case-by-case basis, the extension of foster care up to age 25 for young people who are attending post-secondary institutions or apprenticeship programs and that the Ministry of Education ensure that every youth

in government care have a clear education plan and skills training pathway to guide them up to and through the transition years. The report also recommended that government establish a Youth Secretariat to lead collaboration between the ministries of Children and Family Development, Health, Education, Social Development and Social Innovation, and Justice to make services for youth leaving care more accessible and effective.

June 19, 2014, *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*

This report revealed that adoption placements in B.C. have been declining along with the numbers of newly-approved adoptive homes and made six recommendations to emphasize the importance of increasing public awareness of adoption and specifically enhancing rates of adoption and other forms of permanency planning for Aboriginal children in care.

During the report release, the Representative and the Minister of Children and Family Development Stephanie Cadieux announced a joint commitment to significantly increase adoption rates for children in care.

October 9, 2014, *Not Fully Invested: A Follow-up Report on the Representative's Past Recommendations to Help Vulnerable Children in B.C.*

This report showed that while 72 per cent of the Representative's recommendations to government have been acted on, a number of the most important ones have been ignored. In particular, of nine recommendations made to the B.C. government as a whole, calling for significant cross-ministry involvement and collaboration, seven have been largely disregarded. These unaddressed recommendations include a call for a provincial strategy to reduce child poverty; a comprehensive plan to tackle the complex issue of youth mental health; an effective domestic violence plan; a plan to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and youth in care; and improved quality assurance and outcomes reporting by MCFD and other government bodies.

November 18, 2014, *B.C. Adoptions Update*

In line with the Representative's commitment to provide regular reporting on adoption rates as a follow-up to *Finding Forever Families*, this report provided up-to-date information on adoption rates in B.C. The report followed the launch of a social media campaign to encourage British Columbians to consider adopting. During the first seven months of the fiscal 2014/15, a total of 153 children and youth in care of the provincial government had been adopted. (MCFD's goal for the fiscal year 2014/15 was to realize 300 adoptions of children and youth in care; MCFD achieved 283 adoption placements in 2014/15.)

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2015/16 and 2016/17

At the beginning of 2015, a comprehensive review of the Monitoring program was undertaken with the goal of enhancing its contributions to improving services and outcomes for vulnerable children and to further develop the support it provides to other program areas, the leadership team in the Representative's Office and cross-program initiatives.

Going forward, the team is focused on four key priorities:

1. Working in collaboration with staff responsible for designated services, primarily in MCFD, to contribute to the development of mature quality improvement systems within those services
2. Staying current and connected to key subject areas by designating specific subject matter leads within the Monitoring team
3. Monitoring the implementation of recommendations made by the Representative, and
4. Conducting projects to monitor the performance of selected designated services being provided to children and youth.

Key projects already underway or planned include:

- Completing a multi-year project undertaken with the Provincial Health Officer to produce a follow-up report to the joint 2010 report *Growing Up in B.C.*
- Analyzing the systems available to respond to substance use in children and youth in B.C., including interviews with key stakeholders and the identification of gaps in service.
- Updating data on education outcomes of children in care and reviewing education supports to children in care, including communication and coordination between the education and child welfare systems.
- Continuing monitoring and reporting on MCFD adoption services, focusing on the potential for increased rates of adoption as a result of increased one-time funding and a social media campaign designed to attract and engage potential foster families.
- Completing an analysis of MCFD staffing issues, including recruitment and retention strategies and an assessment of how current staffing levels are impacting service to children and families. This is a follow-up to *Lost in the Shadows: How a Lack of Help Meant a Loss of Hope for One First Nations Girl (Feb. 2014)*, an investigation that revealed serious staff shortages in the MCFD office responsible for providing services to that young girl.

Advocacy

Advocacy Program

Advocacy Support to Children, Youth, Young Adults and Their Families

Understanding and navigating the system of available supports can be overwhelming and challenging. It is the responsibility of the Representative's Advocacy team to support and advocate on behalf of children, youth and their families in having their concerns heard and addressed.

The Advocacy team provides a range of services to support children, youth, young adults and their families. The team responds to requests for help and provides information, support and advice in dealing with the province's child- and youth-serving system. Staff encourage and support self-advocacy and work with child- and youth-serving organizations to ensure that the views and opinions of children, youth and young adults are not only sought, but meaningfully heard and considered on issues that affect them. Where needed and circumstances warrant, Advocacy staff will advocate directly on behalf of a child, youth or a young adult.

When the Advocacy team receives queries from individuals who are seeking help with issues that are outside the Office's mandate, the team will provide information and referrals to relevant agencies and services in an effort to ensure that children, youth, young adults and their families are supported in addressing their concerns.

Case Profile: Supporting Youth in Having their Voices Heard

Issue

A delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) planned to send a 12-year-old Aboriginal girl in care of MCFD to another province to be closer to the reserve she came from and to her guardian, who had relocated from B.C. in the midst of a child abuse investigation. The girl had been removed from her guardian due to the guardian's failure to protect the children in the home. Following her disclosure, the girl asked to be interviewed by a female police officer. A male officer insisted on doing the interview and the child "shut down" shortly into the interview, without making a detailed disclosure.

Action

The advocate from the Representative's Office spoke with the child who was very clear that she wanted to stay in B.C. and did not want to move away to live with or near her guardian and her abuser. She wished to remain with her current caregiver in B.C. who is also Aboriginal and strongly supports the child's culture. The advocate spoke with DAA staff, police and a Children's Advocacy Centre representative about the importance of supporting the child to be interviewed in a way that was sensitive to her needs.

Outcome

As a result of the advocacy of the Representative's Office, the child was interviewed about her abuse by a female interviewer and was satisfied with the process. The DAA supported a new plan respecting the child's wish to remain in her current placement in B.C. The DAA is applying for permanent guardianship in B.C., and supporting a long-term permanency plan in that placement.

Systemic Advocacy

In the course of her work, the Representative may become aware of recurring concerns that may signal a larger systemic issue within the overall child- and youth- or young adult-serving system. When this occurs, the Representative engages in conversations with senior government officials to raise awareness of the over-arching issue and advocates for resolution to the problems.

The Representative's Systemic Advocacy Working Group, made up of individuals from all program areas, operates with the goal of identifying and tracking issues and trends observed in the Representative's work. The team analyzes emergent issues and themes arising from individual advocacy work as well as other internal and external sources of potential systemic advocacy issues including Critical Injury and Death reports, Monitoring work and developments in the community.

Case Profile: Access to Services for Youth Transitioning from MCFD to adult programs

Issue

The Advocacy program is working with two young men who have turned 18 and require physiotherapy services related to physical disabilities. Physiotherapy services are available through the MCFD At-Home program, which assists parents with some of the extraordinary costs of caring for a child with severe disabilities at home through a range of health supports and services. However, this service is not available once individuals reach the age of 18, and youth are expected to apply for Persons with Disability Benefits (PWD) through the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI). Although PWD lists "medical therapy services" as a benefit, it is unclear whether the services needed by these young men will be covered. In both situations, the families need information about what medical therapies may be funded/accessed through PWD benefits and how they can access these services.

Action

The Advocacy team sought clarification of the provision of physiotherapy services through the At-Home and PWD programs by contacting personnel from both MCFD and MSDSI. Details of medical therapies and funding available through PWD were difficult to find, but MSDSI staff assisted in identifying the relevant regulations. It was learned that the benefits (funding for physiotherapy services) offered by MSDSI/PWD are available only as an extension of Ministry of Health Services/ MSP after exhausting 10 sessions provided by Ministry of Health. Funding available through both the Ministry of Health (MSP Benefits) and MSDSI cover only a small portion of the actual cost of physiotherapy and the families involved are unable to bear the costs and access the benefits.

Outcome

The issue remains unresolved at the present time but the Representative's Office continues to advocate for timely, affordable access to physiotherapy to enable youth to access medically necessary services to avoid pain and further physical and mobility problems.

Highlights of 2014/15 Activities

Advocacy Initiatives

Youth Custody Centre Workshops and Advocacy

The Representative's Advocacy team continues to deliver training to MCFD Youth Custody Centre staff on the services of the Representative's Office in supporting youth. On a monthly basis, the Advocacy team offers and provides one-on-one advocacy support to youth at the Burnaby and Prince George Youth Custody Centres, as well as information workshops.

RCY Advocacy Related to the Victoria Youth Custody Centre Closure

In April of 2014, MCFD announced the closure of the Victoria Youth Custody Centre, leaving Burnaby and Prince George as the two operational facilities in the province. The Representative advocated strongly for MCFD to continue to operate the centre to serve Vancouver Island youth. Youth at the Victoria Centre spoke with the Representative's staff about their concerns with the closure and were supported in writing a letter to Minister Stephanie Cadieux – a positive example of youth engaging in systemic self-advocacy, bringing their voice and views forward to the decision maker. Staff of the Representative's Office continue to remain involved at the former Victoria facility, as MCFD currently operates a provincial remand facility from this location for youth from the island.

Case Profile: Supporting Permanency Planning

Issue

The circumstances of a seven-year-old Aboriginal boy who has been in foster care for 6½ years were brought to the attention of the Representative's Office by a concerned service provider agency. Although the child has been eligible for adoption for many years, a permanency plan was not complete. Prospective adoptive parents became frustrated with the lengthy process and lack of communication from the MCFD guardianship worker.

Action

The Representative's Advocacy team advocated for adherence to standards for regular contact with children in care, determination of the child's wishes, timely communication with all involved parties, timely development of a cultural plan and permanency plan and scheduled progress reports.

Outcome

The agency developed and implemented a plan – with timelines – to explore options with family members, members of his Aboriginal community and other potential families. A cultural plan and permanency plan were developed. The agency reported on progress as scheduled and plans are on track for permanent caregivers to be identified for this child shortly.

Engagement with Young Adults and Promotion of Disability Rights

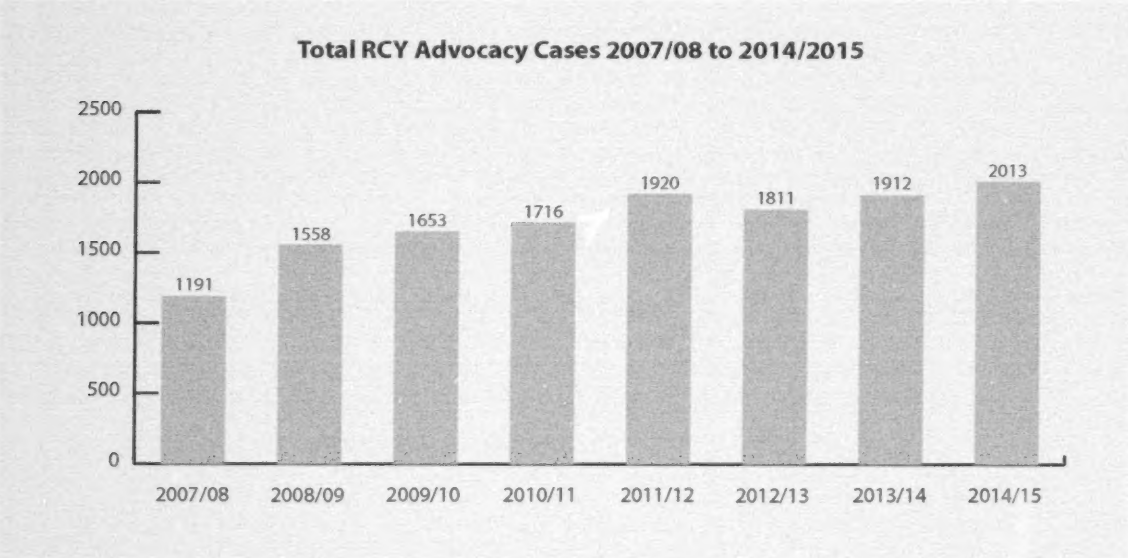
To promote the Representative's advocacy mandate for young adults with developmental disabilities and to engage self-advocates in discussions about rights and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD), the Advocacy team engaged in meetings, planning processes and community events. Highlights include the Aboriginal Communities' Perspectives on Disability conference and conferences with BC People First (BCPF) and Inclusion BC.

In the Spring of 2014, the Advocacy team worked with BCPF to develop a one-page, plain language version of the UNCRPD. This was followed by the successful launch of a rights workshop co-developed and co-facilitated by BCPF and the Representative's Office using the plain language *UNCRPD* document and "The Rights Game" included in the Representative's Rep4Rights mobile application, to engage participants in applying the *UNCRDP* to scenarios encountered by young adults in the community.

Advocacy Cases and Trends

Between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, the Representative's Advocacy team dealt with 2,013 cases – the largest number of advocacy cases dealt with in a single year in the Office's history. Between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2015, 13,744 cases have been opened.

Figure 7 – Total Advocacy Cases 2007/08 to 2014/15



The following Figures 8 and 9 depict the origin of advocacy cases by source of initial contact and by region.

Figure 8 - Advocacy Cases by Initial Contact 2014/15

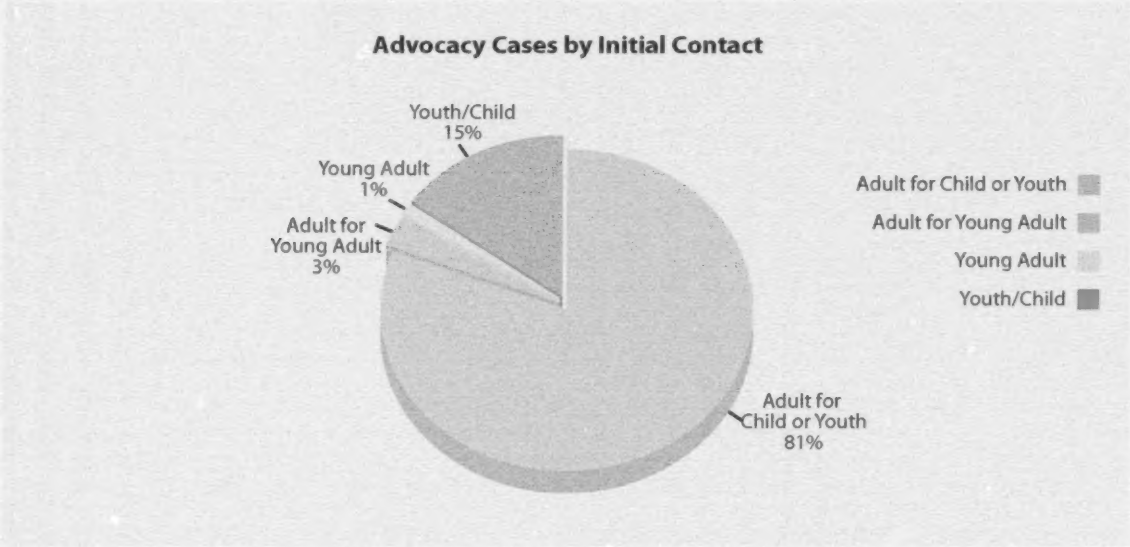
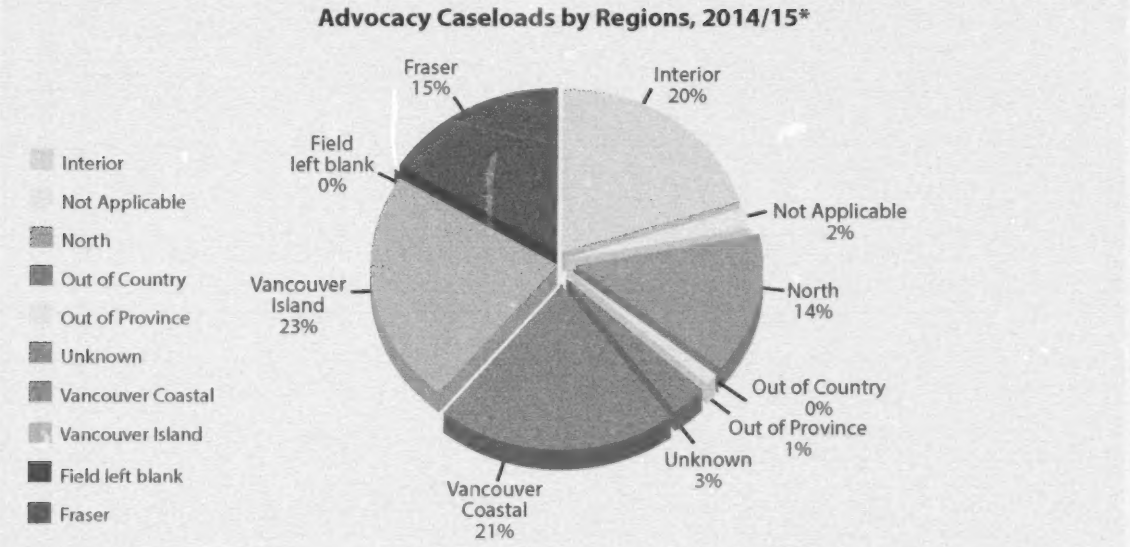


*Figure 9 – Advocacy Caseloads by Region 2014/15**



[Note*: the percentage displayed in Figure 9 for each of the regions is the aggregate of children and youth and young adults advocacy cases.]

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2015/16 and 2016/17

In the spring of 2015, priorities to guide the work of the Advocacy team for the next two years were identified. These priorities include the following five goals as well as goals presented under Community Relations and Youth Engagement:

1. Increase direct contact with children, youth and young adults in individual advocacy cases – objectives include increasing the percentage of advocacy clients who receive direct contact with Advocacy team members and the percentage of face-to-face client-related advocacy meetings.
2. Refine processes to identify advocacy case outcomes and systemic advocacy issues – objectives include updating the Advocacy team's process for identifying advocacy case issues and outcomes and leading a cross-program process to revise systemic advocacy policies and procedures.
3. Revise advocacy policies, procedures and materials – objectives include prioritizing and revising processes and materials to streamline and improve efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Analyze advocacy caseloads and workloads – objectives include examining factors affecting advocacy case work and identifying targets for the number of cases on a caseload and strategies for ensuring responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Model and implement healthy workplace practices – objectives include implementing organization-wide strategies and Advocacy team-specific strategies to promote healthy workplace practices.

Aboriginal Initiatives

The Representative and her staff seek out every opportunity to engage, collaborate and establish partnerships with Aboriginal communities to deliver outreach and advocacy services and to support initiatives that improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and youth. In doing this work, the Office strives to respect the unique sense of place, culture, language and rights of Aboriginal peoples.

The Office also collaborates with provincial, federal and Aboriginal governments and leaders in addressing issues related to Aboriginal children and youth receiving government services given the distinct jurisdictional boundaries and service delivery for those living on- and off-reserve.

Highlights of 2014/15 Activities

Operational Highlights

Advocating for improved services for Aboriginal children, youth, and families has been a significant focus of the Representative across all program areas. In January 2015, the position of Director, Aboriginal Initiatives was established to further enhance this work. This position reports to the Deputy Representative and is accountable for providing consultation and advice to the Executive and Representative's Office as a whole with respect to systemic advocacy matters that impact Aboriginal children and youth and strategies for the meaningful engagement of Aboriginal communities and organizations. Some of the key accountabilities for this position include:

- providing consultation, advice and expertise to staff across the organization regarding Aboriginal children and youth and with respect to engaging with Aboriginal peoples and communities
- liaising with service providers, including MCFD, DAAs, AANDC and other community service stakeholders and maintaining effective two-way communication in order to monitor trends and issues affecting Aboriginal children, youth and families
- monitoring initiatives of the federal, provincial and international governments and agencies to identity best practices and effective models and approaches for all program areas, including Aboriginal child, family and community engagement
- managing community relations and youth engagement with Aboriginal children, families, communities and other stakeholders.

Aboriginal Engagement

Highlights of activities and initiatives undertaken by the Representative's Office in 2014/15 to reach out to and engage with Aboriginal communities and people include:

- ongoing outreach with Aboriginal stakeholders regarding systemic advocacy matters, best practices forums, partnership meetings with DAAs, community events promoting hope and health for children in care, meetings with First Nations leadership, meetings with education partners, child rights roundtable discussions, and youth gatherings;

- employing an intern under the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program sponsored through a partnership between the B.C. Public Service Agency and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. The program offers 12-month internships to Aboriginal youth ages 19 to 29 and is designed to provide participants with opportunities to "build their professional skills and networks, get a taste for pursuing a career in government, and above all, awaken their capacity for leadership";
- participating in National Aboriginal Day events hosted at Trout Lake in Vancouver, Prince George, and community events at Hiiye"yu Lelum House of Friendship in Duncan and Spirit of the Peace Pow Wow in Taylor;
- requiring staff to complete the Indigenous Cultural Competency Training program offered through the Provincial Health Services Authority to ensure that staff bring an Aboriginal perspective to their work and work in a respectful and meaningful way with Aboriginal children, youth and their families.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2015/16 and 2016/17

Strategic initiatives and activities underway and planned to promote engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal communities and organizations **and to obtain input of Aboriginal communities and organizations on both services provided by the Representative and on improvement to programs for Aboriginal children and youth and their families include:**

- Hosting a forum in Spring 2015 on permanency planning for First Nations, Aboriginal and Métis children in partnership with the Directors Forum representing the 23 DAAs and MCFD. The forum will cover reconciliation, custom adoption, and life-long family and tribal connections.
- Development of a strategic plan for systemic advocacy and community outreach and promotion of improvements in Aboriginal child welfare service delivery.
- Development of an Aboriginal youth engagement initiative with a special emphasis on adoption and permanency.

Community Relations and Youth Engagement

In 2014/15, the Representative's Office continued its efforts to raise and build awareness about the rights of children and youth and the services that the Representative's Office offers to vulnerable children, youth, young adults and their families through increased community relations and youth engagement activity.

The focus of the Office's community relations and youth engagement activities was to:

- increase public education about the Representative's Office and advocacy services, rights and self-advocacy skills, and
- increase its involvement in special and community events targeted for young people.

Highlights of 2014/15 Activities

Community Outreach

To support community relations and outreach activities, the Representative's Office developed an outreach strategy and undertook a range of activities to raise the profile and increase awareness of the Representative and the services of her Office, to inform British Columbians about the Representative's mandate, and to build relationships with child- and youth-serving agencies including MCFD, CLBC and DAAs, and young people accessing their services.

The Representative and her staff were involved in a wide range of community events and outreach activities including:

- facilitating child and youth rights workshops
- attending and presenting at conferences and other relevant forums
- attending community events
- hosting information sessions with community child-, youth- and young adult-serving organizations and groups, and government staff
- hosting information booths at community events to distribute information and materials and meet and talk to stakeholders and the public.

The Office also hosted two major events of its own. On Sept. 24, 2014, the Representative's Burnaby office held an open house to celebrate the launch of the new Rep4Rights app, the first year anniversary of the Representative's expanded mandate to serve young adults eligible for CLBC services, and the new Burnaby office location. Both the Representative and the chair of the SSCCY spoke at the open house that was attended by 75 youth and young people and members of child- and youth-serving organizations.

On Nov. 20, 2014, the Representative's Prince George office hosted an open house in honour of National Child Day. The event was open to the public, who could meet with advocates and pick up information and resources on child's rights. The day also included a youth lunch, where young people enjoyed pizza, learned about their rights and participated in creating an "art" wall.

Youth Engagement

The rights, needs and interests of children and youth are a central consideration of the Representative's work. To effectively meet her mandate, the Representative reaches out directly to children, youth and young adults to raise awareness about the advocacy services that the Representative offers, as well as to build an understanding in young people about their rights, to empower them to speak out for themselves, and to hear directly from them about how services and programs can best meet their needs.

Youth Transition Workshops

Consistent with the priority of the Representative's Office to connect with young people directly, in 2014/15 a substantial undertaking was the development and delivery of one-day workshops across the province for youth in government care aimed at providing them with knowledge and skills to support their transition from care.

The one-day "Plan Your Path" workshops were a joint effort of the Representative's Office, the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) and the Federation of B.C. Youth In Care Networks (FBCYICN). The Representative's Advocacy team delivered activities to help young people know and understand their rights. The PGT led a session on financial literacy that included basic budgeting, goal-setting and a self-assessment of their values, needs, and wants. The FBCYICN gathered information from youth about their experiences in government care and their recommendations for improvement.

The "Plan Your Path" workshop team visited several communities from November 2014 through March 2015 and, in the end, following further meetings to be held in April 2015 and into May 2015, the team will have visited 20 communities, and met with 225 young people and more than 100 service providers, community members and foster parents.

Youth-Focused Community Relations Activities

In addition to the "Plan Your Path" provincial tour, the Representative and her staff participated in the following youth-focused events:

- the Gathering Our Voices Aboriginal youth conference that took place over four days in March 2015 in Prince George. The largest Aboriginal youth conference in Canada, Gathering Our Voices had more than 1,800 youth participants. The Representative's staff hosted a display booth connecting with and distributing educational materials to more than 600 youth participants. The Representative's staff also delivered two child rights workshops for youth and two adult sessions.
- the Vancouver Foundation's Fostering Change: Conversations on Youth Transition, as well as the Fresh Voices Youth Conference, a gathering of 120 immigrant and refugee youth held in December 2014.
- the FBCYICN Steering Committee meetings at which staff were also available to provide advocacy support to youth in and from care.

Communities Visited

The map of B.C. on the following page shows the communities visited by the Representative and staff of the Representative's Office between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 as part of its ongoing advocacy work, and its community relations and youth engagement activities, including the "Plan Your Path" workshops held throughout the province. Over the course of the year, the Representative's Office visited 44 communities.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2015/16 and 2016/17

The Advocacy team will work in concert with the Aboriginal Initiatives team in 2015/16 and 2016/17 to coordinate the planning and delivery of community relations and youth engagement activities.

Community Relations

The over-arching goal for community relations is to establish and improve relationships with community and government agencies serving children, youth and young adults. Objectives include establishing a community relations activities calendar and capitalizing on opportunities to combine community relations activities with individual advocacy case meetings and activities.

Priority audiences for community relations include:

- Self-advocacy organizations including the BCFYICN and BCPF
- Organizations involved with youth who may be transitioning to CLBC services, including DAAs, the Family Support Institute, Inclusion BC and MCFD's Children and Youth with Special Needs program.

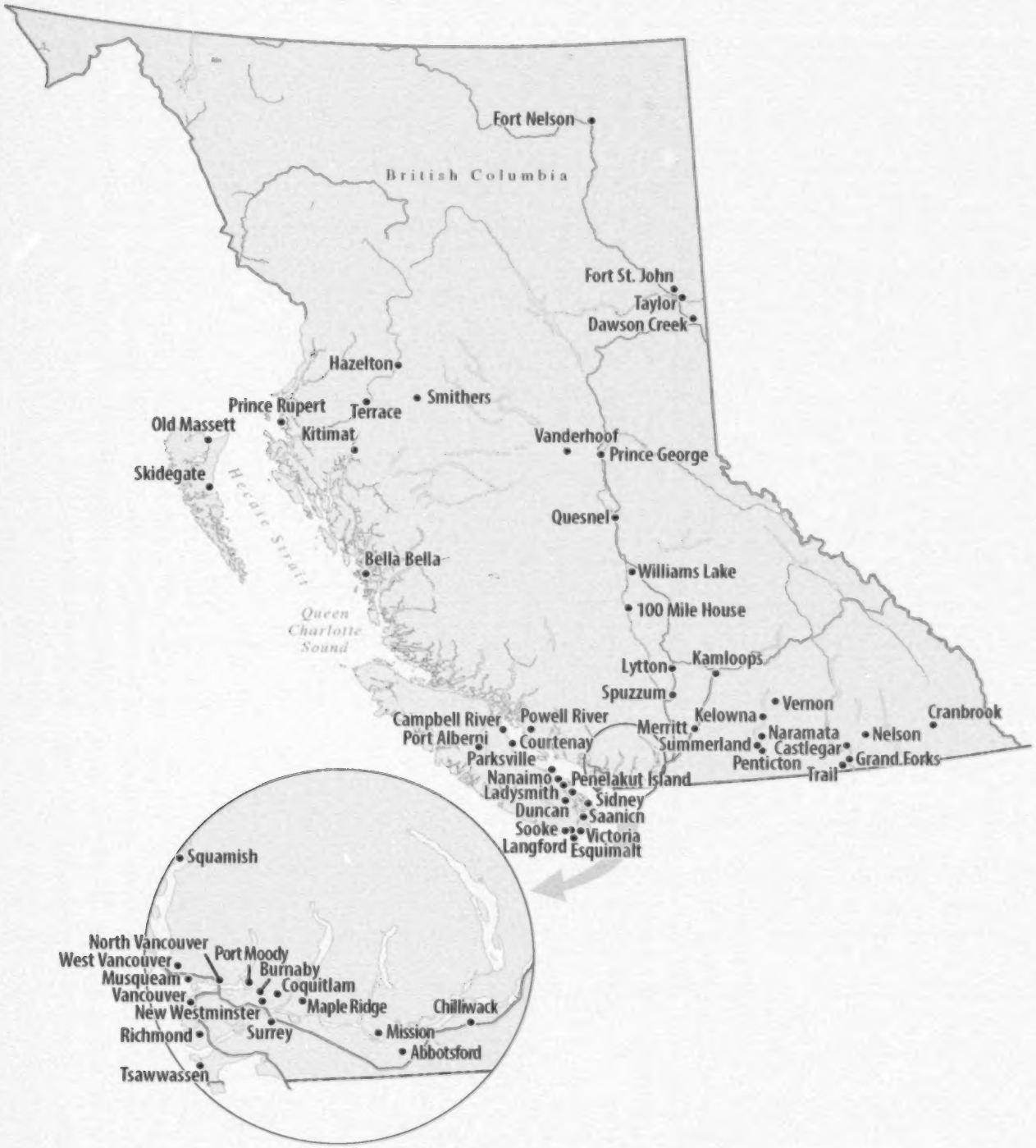
Youth Engagement

The Representative's Office will continue to implement strategies to promote meaningful engagement with youth. The over-arching goal for the Youth Engagement program is to raise awareness about RCY advocacy services and rights of young people and educate young people about rights and self-advocacy. Objectives include establishing a youth engagement activities calendar and capitalizing on opportunities to combine youth engagement activities with individual advocacy case meetings and activities."

Specific activities include:

- Development of rights workshops for each of the following age groups – 5- to 8-years-old, 9- to 12-years-old, 13- to 15-years-old, 16- to 18-years-old, and youth and young adults 19 to 24 with developmental disabilities
- Delivery of youth-rights workshops in all regions of the province
- Promotion of the Rep4Rights app among youth and front-line service providers to support youth in developing effective self-advocacy skills.

Communities Visited



Communications

The Communications team creates and builds awareness about the Representative's Office, its mandate, and the services it offers to children, youth and their families and provides support to the Representative and program areas in assisting with and promoting activities and initiatives.

The Communications team manages and responds to media requests, supports the production and public release of reports and statements by the Representative, and manages the contribution of articles and information from the Representative to stakeholder newsletters.

It is a priority for the Representative to connect with as many British Columbians as possible. The Communications team maintains an active online and social media presence reaching out to children, youth, families, stakeholders and the public through a range of channels. The team supports the Representative and her staff to travel throughout the province to meet with, speak to, engage and share information with youth, stakeholder groups, child-, youth- and young adult-serving organizations and the public, and assists in the delivery of major outreach initiatives and events. (The Appendix contains a list of community and stakeholder events and conferences, meetings, speaking engagements and workshops in which the Representative and her staff participated.)

The Communications team also supports the Representative in ongoing efforts to create awareness of the need for support for former children in care to access post-secondary education including building partnerships with stakeholders to provide tuition waivers or bursaries and additional financial support programs to assist these students.

Highlights of 2014/15 Activities

Media Requests

Between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, the Representative's Office responded to 219 requests from the media for interviews and information. These requests covered wide-ranging topics including MCFD staffing, MCFD funding, youth mental health, adoptions, youth homelessness, the closure of the Victoria Youth Custody Centre, domestic violence, high-profile cases involving children and youth, foster care, tuition waivers for former youth in care, various reports issued by the Representative, and the use of seclusion and restraints on special needs students in schools.

Website and Social Media

The Representative's Office has a proactive social media presence, conducting online communications and outreach through Facebook, YouTube and Twitter accounts including a youth-focused @RCYBCyouth Twitter account that features youth-friendly content of specific interest to young people. The Office uses social media for multiple purposes, including publicizing media appearances, broadcasting the Representative's positions and statements as well as public events held by the Representative's Office and other child- and youth-serving organizations, informing and educating the public, and connecting with stakeholders and the media. The Office also uses social media to engage with youth and young people and listen to their concerns.

In November 2014, the Office partnered with MCFD and the Adoptive Families Association of BC to launch "1,000 Families," a social media campaign to encourage British Columbians to consider adopting one of the more than 1,000 children and teens who are currently waiting for a forever family.

In June 2014, the Representative's Office launched a new, more responsive and mobile-friendly website to make the Office's services, information and news more easily accessible on mobile devices and included assistive technology for those with special needs. Since the launch, visits to the website have increased six-fold.

Also in 2014/15, the Office released a ground-breaking mobile app – Rep4Rights – aimed at engaging and empowering youth to learn about their rights and how to advocate for themselves. Created in consultation with young people, Rep4Rights includes advocacy scenarios, tips on how to put advocacy into action, descriptions of different rights, a "rights" game and audio and video segments narrated by young people. The Rep4Rights app is promoted through the Office website and social media, through mailing information "tent" cards to stakeholders including MLAs, MCFD and CLBC offices and through the Burnaby open house and community events, youth workshops and service provider information sessions. The app was launched on Sept. 24, 2014. As of March 31, 2015, the Rep4Rights app had been downloaded 298 times.

Speaking Up on Issues of Importance to Children and Youth

The Representative continues to speak up publicly on issues of provincial, national and global significance to children and youth and in support of their rights. In 2014/15 this included:

- June 1, 2014 – the Representative's statement to B.C.'s children and youth in care during Child and Youth in Care Week, focusing on education and the right of children and youth in government care to be educated and to be well-supported through school, and the efforts taken by the Representative to recommend improvements to ensure equal educational opportunities for children and youth in care in B.C.
- Aug. 28, 2014 – as a member of the CCCYA, the Representative was a signatory to the CCCYA's letter to the Council of the Federation (comprised of the 13 provincial and territorial premiers) on the need for a comprehensive strategy for Aboriginal children and youth.
- Nov. 17, 2014 – as a member of the CCCYA, the Representative jointly released a statement marking the 25th Anniversary of the ratification of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and urging the federal government to immediate action to reduce the number of Aboriginal children and youth in care in child welfare systems across Canada.

On May 28, 2014, the Representative was honoured by McGill University at its Spring Convocation ceremony with an Honourary Doctor of Laws degree. The honourary degree recognized the national caliber of the work of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, including the contribution made by the Representative as a member of the CCCYA to the periodic review of Canada's implementation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and for speaking out about Aboriginal child welfare.

Strategic Initiatives Underway and Planned for 2015/16 and 2016/17

The Representative's Office will continue to enhance its outreach activities to raise awareness of the role of the Office and the services it offers over the coming years. In addition to attending stakeholder events, presenting at conferences and engaging with the public and media, the Office is undertaking an updated and innovative approach to online outreach through specific efforts to inform and engage youth.

Major strategic Communications initiatives underway and planned over the next two years include:

- Re-establishment of a Social Media Committee with representation from throughout the Office to build on current approaches and develop a multi-pronged social media strategy for engaging the Office's numerous stakeholders, with a special emphasis on youth.
- Establishment of a Youth Social Media Team to provide a youth perspective with regard to the Office's social media presence and content. The Youth Social Media Team will be comprised of a diverse group of young people from across the province who will provide advice and content on various platforms including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.
- Development of a youth Facebook page to engage youth and build on the existing social media presence of the Representative's Office.
- Development of a YouTube channel containing short videos illustrating the functions performed by the different parts of the Representative's Office and explaining the services provided.
- Creation of videos to accompany reports, including videos designed specifically to reach children and youth.

Performance

The Office measures its performance in achieving its outcomes of relevance, responsiveness, accountability and excellence by tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) and associated performance targets. In addition to KPIs, the Office also tracks a number of secondary indicators for each outcome. The Office uses three primary data sources to measure its performance: internal management information systems; publicly available reports; and survey data.

The Office uses its performance management information to understand how effective its strategies are in terms of meeting its legislated mandate to advocate for children and youth and to provide independent oversight to the child- and youth-serving system. Based on the results, the Office will alter or enhance its strategies and approaches to providing services and delivering programs.

Intended Outcomes

The Representative's Office measures its performance in meeting its mandate and achieving its vision and goals through assessing the following outcomes:

- *Relevance* – means that the Office:
  - addresses issues and areas of concern within its mandate and of interest to the Legislature and the public;
  - is aware of and reacts readily and appropriately to issues brought to its attention through its monitoring, and review and investigation activities, its liaison and collaboration with public bodies, and by legislators, stakeholders and the public;
  - produces reports that are useful to, accessible and understood by the public, stakeholders, and Legislature; and
  - makes recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of designated programs and reviewable services with the goal of improving the child- and youth-serving system.
- *Responsiveness* – means that the Office:
  - addresses requests from children, youth, and young adults and their families for support, assistance, information and advice in a timely and sensitive way;
  - analyzes and takes timely and appropriate action in relation to reported critical injuries and deaths of children and youth receiving reviewable services; and
  - reaches out to children, youth and young adults and their families, the child- and youth-serving system, and communities to build awareness of the rights of children and youth and young adults and the services of the Office.
- *Accountability* – means that the Office:
  - reports regularly and in an open and transparent way about its activities to the Legislature and British Columbians; and
  - provides information on its plans, activities and performance to the SSCCY for review and scrutiny.
- *Excellence* – means that the Office meets high standards of professional and corporate conduct through:
  - a competent, ethical and diverse staff; and
  - rigorous application and compliance with established requirements in all its operations.

Relevance

The Representative ensures relevance in meeting her oversight and accountability role by addressing areas of concern within her mandate that are of interest and importance to the Legislature and public. This is measured by the extent to which the work of the Office responds to concerns or matters brought to the attention of the Representative through her oversight activities and liaison and collaboration with public bodies and other stakeholders, illustrating that the Representative is alert to issues, is in touch with the system and stakeholders and reacts accordingly.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Percentage of the work of the Office, as reflected in public reports, papers, submissions and statements of position, that was in response to a concern or matter arising from an external source or stakeholder.

2014/15 target	2014/15 result	2015/16 target
40%	58%	50%

Other Indicators of Relevance:

- *Public accountability* for the review and investigations of critical injuries and deaths – measured by ensuring the regular preparation and production of public updates every four months outlining the number of reports received, reviews undertaken and cases identified for investigation by the Representative.

  In 2014/15, the Representative issued Report #20 – Critical Injuries and Deaths Review and Investigation for the period Oct. 1, 2013 – Jan. 31, 2014, Report #21 for the period Feb. 1, 2014 – May 31, 2014, and Report #22 for the period June 1 – Sept. 30, 2014.

- *Progress on recommendations* – measured through the ongoing monitoring and tracking of action taken on all recommendations made to public bodies by the Office on suggestions for improvements and enhancements to child- and youth-serving services and programs. Whether or not recommendations are implemented is not in the control of the Representative; progress on recommendations does, however, provide some measure of the Representative's success in influencing public bodies to make improvements.

  As noted earlier, in October 2014, the Representative issued a comprehensive report on the 148 recommendations made by the Representative in 22 reports during the six-year period between Jan. 1, 2008 and Dec. 31, 2013 and government's response to implementing those recommendations. The Representative continues to track the status of unimplemented recommendations made in reports issued prior to Jan. 1, 2014 and the progress of recommendations made in the six reports issued since that time.

- *Relevance to the public* – measured by the public's interest in the work of the Office, by tracking the number of times information and resources on the Representative's website are viewed by the public.

  In 2014/15, 64,425 users accessed 516,608 documents on the Representative's website.

- *Relevance to stakeholders* – measured by the percentage of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the Office, perceive that the Office addresses issues of significance that fall within the Representative's mandate and that the Representative's reports are credible, independent and objective.

  In 2014/15, the Office undertook a third stakeholder awareness survey[6] (the first was in 2012/13). The survey found that 93 per cent of respondents had "some knowledge" or "knew a great deal" about the Representative's mandate and duties and 80 per cent or more reported they were aware of the Representative's three core mandated functions. More than 87 per cent felt that the Office addresses issues of significance that fall within the Representative's mandate and more than 82 per cent felt that the Representative's reports are credible and independent. In addition, 77 per cent felt that the Representative's reports make a difference in the lives of B.C.'s vulnerable children and youth.

  People who obtained information about Representative's work did so most commonly through a publication produced by the Office (69 per cent), through the traditional media (58 per cent), and through the Representative's website (42 per cent).

Responsiveness

Timely and effective response to requests for assistance and support from vulnerable children, youth and their families, as well as timely and effective review and investigation of incidents of critical injury or death are essential for the Representative to meet her mandate.

Key Performance Indicator:	2014/15 target	2014/15 result	2015/16 target
• Percentage of adult callers requesting advocacy services the Office responds to within the established three-day response timeline.	100%	99%	100%
• Percentage of screening and review of reports of child and youth critical injuries or deaths that are completed by the Office within the established two-month timeframe.	100%	100%	100%

[6] **The survey was distributed to organizations and individuals who had some form of contact with the Office and for which the Office had an e-mail address.**

Other Indicators of Responsiveness:

- *Responsiveness to advocacy calls* – measured by the percentage of youth requests for service responded to within 24 hours. The goal is to ensure that all youth in contact with the Office receive an initial response to their request for service within this period.

  In 2014/15, 98 per cent, or 299 out of 306 youth calls, were responded to within 24 hours.

  Another measure of responsiveness is the percentage of those who are satisfied with the amount of time to it took to respond to their inquiry and with the general overall experience and interaction with Advocacy program staff. The target rate for satisfaction with response time is 75 per cent. The 2014/15 Advocacy Survey found that 72 per cent of clients (73 per cent in 2013/14 and 70 per cent in 2012/13) reported that they were satisfied with the amount of time it took to respond to their inquiry and that 73 per cent of clients were satisfied with their overall experience and interaction with Advocacy staff (up eight per cent from the 2013/14 survey results).

- *Community relations and stakeholder engagement* – measured by tracking the number of appearances or presentations by Office staff at stakeholder and community events, the number of community relations and engagement activities and the number of communities visited with the goal of ensuring that the Representative is engaging and reaching out to children, youth and their families and stakeholders across the province.

  In 2014/15, the Representative and her staff participated in more than 230 community outreach and engagement activities including events and conferences, workshops, meetings and speaking engagements. The Appendix includes a list of outreach activities undertaken by the Representative and her staff in 2014/15.

- *Youth participation* – measured by the number of interactions and engagement activities with youth to raise awareness about their rights and the services of the Office. The goal is to steadily increase the awareness of youth and young adults through increased events and interactions.

  In 2014/15, the Representative's Office directly engaged with more than 320 youth through the "Plan Your Path" and other workshops and events.

- *Aboriginal initiatives* – measured by the number of collaborative efforts or initiatives with Aboriginal communities and organizations on mutually identified issues of shared concern.

  In 2014/15, the Representative and her staff met with 32 Aboriginal organizations and individual First Nations, had four speaking engagements and participated in 21 Aboriginal conferences and events.

Accountability

A key outcome for the Representative is to be accountable to the Legislature and British Columbians for the work of her Office. A broad measure of how the Representative demonstrates her accountability is through the public release of reports and papers (including periodic reports on child injuries and death reviews and investigations) and comments and statements about the findings of her work.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Number of reports and papers publicly released and the number of public comments and statements made by the Representative.

2014/15 target	2014/15 result	2015/16 target
5 reports & statements	10 reports, 2 statements	5 reports & statements

Other Indicators of Accountability:

Another indicator of accountability is the number of times the Representative makes presentations to the SSCCY.

In 2014/15, the Representative appeared before the SSCCY three times and presented on reports she had previously released including the 2013/2014 Annual Report and 2014/2015 to 2015/16 Service Plan (which the SSCCY is legislatively mandated to review). At each of these meetings, the Representative also provided updates on the work of her Office, and discussed general issues of concern.

Excellence

Excellence in service delivery is achieved and maintained through competent and skilled staff. A key indicator of the Office's achievement of excellence is the extent to which staff undertake ongoing professional development to ensure that they stay current and up-to-date on emerging issues and trends, expand their knowledge and skills base and promote their own personal development.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Percentage of full-time and part-time staff who participate in ongoing professional development.

2014/15 target	2014/15 result	2015/16 target
95%	100%	95%

Some examples of professional development undertaken by Office staff include:

- Participation by two staff in the annual International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child at the University of Moncton in New Brunswick;
- Completion by 60 staff of the Provincial Health Services Authority's Indigenous Cultural Competency Training;

- Participation by many staff across three Office locations in internal training opportunities (known as "RCY University") including sessions on the First Nations Health Authority, trauma-informed practice, and the prescription of psychotropic drugs to children and youth.

Other Indicators of Excellence:

Other indicators of excellence that the Office tracks include:

- *Staff contribution to meeting mandate* – measured by the degree to which staff are engaged in their work and perceive that they contribute to the achievement of the Office's mandate.

  In past years, the Office has surveyed its staff to gauge their views of their contribution to meeting the mandate of the Office. These surveys provided valuable input on ways to enhance the sense of engagement and contribution of staff in meeting the mandate, vision and goals of the Office. Based on staff feedback, in 2014/15 a new, more interactive, approach to fostering an engaged, respectful and healthy workplace was introduced with the creation of the Committee for an Engaged and Respectful Workplace (CREW). CREW is responsible for discussing, developing and forwarding ideas to the Representative and the Executive team about how the work environment can be improved and the organization can be made more effective. This year, and in 2015/16, CREW's work is focused on four key areas: organizational values; internal communications and strategic planning; workplace flexibility; and bullying and harassment awareness and prevention.

- *Health, safety and well-being of staff* – measured through addressing any health and safety matters immediately and effectively in compliance with occupational health and safety laws and meeting the needs of staff and ongoing support for, and facilitation of, activities and programs to support staff well-being.

  During the reporting period, there were no major health and safety incidents in any of the three office locations. Minor incidents included facilities issues or first aid incidents that did not result in work time loss. The Office has an active and engaged Occupational Health and Safety Committee that meets monthly to review safety incidents and first aid reports, and to recommend changes to policies and procedures to ensure health and safety issues are addressed in accordance with WorkSafe BC legislation, regulations, policies and standards.

- *Ongoing compliance with core policies* – measured through Office policies and procedures adhering to applicable core government policies, standards and practices and the Office meeting budgeting and audit standards and requirements.

  In 2014/15, the Office was found to be in full compliance with core government policies, standards and practices and its annual financial audit.

OVERVIEW – Office of the Representative for Children and Youth Strategic Performance Measurement Framework						
Mandate	**Values and Principles**	**Immediate Outcomes**	**Key Performance Indicators**	**2014/15 target**	**2014/15 result**	**2015/16 target**
Representative for Children and Youth Act • Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations • Advocacy • Monitoring	*Principles:* • Independence • Accountability • Child-centred *Values:* • Respect • Integrity • Critical thinking • Collaboration	Relevance	Percentage of work undertaken by the Office in response to external oversight, issues raised, matters brought to the Office's attention, or questions from MLAs, the public and stakeholders	40%	50%	40%
		Responsiveness	Percentage of cases in which the Office responds to requests for adult calls for advocacy services within the established three-day response timeline	100%	99%	100%
			Percentage of screening and review of reports of child and youth critical injuries or deaths reported to the Office that are completed by the Office within established two-month timeframe	100%	100%	100%
		Accountability	Number of reports/ statements publicly released by Representative	5 reports & statements	10 reports; 2 statements	5 reports & statements
		Excellence	Percentage of permanent, full- and part-time staff who participate in professional development activities	95%	100%	95%

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July 31, 2015

VIA E-MAIL

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
Representative for Children and Youth
Office of the Representative for Children and Youth
Suite 400, 1019 Wharf Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2Y9

Dear Ms. Turpel-Lafond:

Re: Audit of the Statement of the Expenditures for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth for the Year Ended March 31, 2015

Please find enclosed a copy of the audited financial statements of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, for the year ended March 31, 2015, together with our auditor's report.

Please note that no changes are to be made to the attached final version of the financial statements without the consent of the Auditor General.

Yours truly,

Bill Gilhooly, CPA, CA, PMP
Assistant Auditor General

CT/km
Enclosures

Copy: Dawn Thomas-Wightman, Deputy Representative for Children and Youth
Dianne Buljat, CFO and Manager, Finance and Facilities

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Representative for Children and Youth, Province of British Columbia.

Report on the Statement of Expenditures

I have audited the accompanying statement of expenditures of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth ("the entity") for the year ended March 31, 2015, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information (together "the financial statement").

Management's Responsibility for the Statement of Expenditures

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of this financial statement in accordance with government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual described in Note 2, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statement based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statement, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statement in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statement.

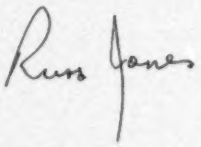
In my view, the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statement of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth for the year ended March 31, 2015, is prepared in all material respects, in accordance with government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual.

Basis of Accounting

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 2 to the financial statement, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statement is prepared to provide information to the Province of British Columbia. As a result, the statement may not be suitable for another purpose.



Victoria, British Columbia
July 31, 2015

Russ Jones, FCPA, FCA
Deputy Auditor General

Fiscal Year 2014/2015 Statement of Expenditures

Expense Type	2014/15 Estimates $	2014/15 Actual $	2013/14 Actual $
Salaries of Permanent & Temporary Employees	4,396,000	4,419,744	4,128,613
Employee Benefits	1,119,000	1,107,378	995,081
Travel	224,000	232,565	328,511
Centralized Mgmt Support Services	–	98	–
Professional Services	482,000	319,896	630,054
Information Systems	444,000	532,477	456,367
Office & Business Expenses	393,000	354,759	439,545
Info Advertising & Publications	–	1,670	–
Utilities, Materials & Supplies	26,000	14,781	22,422
Operating Equipment & Vehicles	8,000	3,922	5,607
Amortization	15,000	23,783	46,269
Gain / Loss on Capital Asset Disposal	–	6,360	–
Building Occupancy	802,000	799,579	644,631
Transfers – General	5,000	–	233,000
Interest Costs – Non Public Debt	2,000	4	147
Other Expenses	1,000	681	841
Recoveries	–	–	(15,196)
Total Expenses	**7,917,000**	**7,817,697**	**7,915,892**

Approved on behalf of the Office:

Signature

July 21, 2015
Date

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the statement of expenditures.

1. Nature of Operations

The Representative for Children and Youth is an Officer of the Legislature of British Columbia appointed under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* upon unanimous recommendation of a special committee. The Representative must be appointed for a term of five years and may be reappointed one additional five year term. The Representative meets with the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth to present an Annual Report and Service Plan, and to present reports on the work of the Office in three areas mandated under the *Act*:

- Advocacy – providing information, advice and assistance to children and youth and their families and to young adults and their families who need help dealing with designated or prescribed services or programs provided or funded by government, and promoting and facilitating the development of advocacy services within communities.

- Monitoring – undertaking research, review, evaluation and audit of government funded services and programs to identify and make recommendations for change to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of these services.

- Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations – conducting reviews and undertaking investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services to identify and make recommendations for improvements to services to prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.

Funding for the operation of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (the Office) comes from a voted appropriation (Vote 9) of the Legislative Assembly.

The Office is exempt from income taxes under the *Income Tax Act*.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

a. Basis of accounting

The statement of expenditures is presented in accordance with the B.C. Government's financial and management policy outlined in the Core Policy and Procedures Manual.

b. Expenses

Expenses are reported on an accrual basis. The cost of all goods consumed and services received during the year is expensed.

Transfers include entitlements, grants and transfers under shared cost agreements. Grants and transfers are recorded as expenses when the transfer is authorized and eligibility criteria have been met by the recipient.

Appendix – List of Outreach and Communication Activities

Community and Stakeholder Events and Conferences

Aboriginal Community Perspectives on Disability Conference (May, 2014)

BC Association of Social Workers Conference (October, 2014)

BC CEO Network Conference (September, 2014)

BC Foster Parents Appreciation Night (October, 2014)

BC People First Conference (May, 2014)

BC Representative for Children and Youth Policy Forum (April, 2014)

BC Society of Transitions Forum (October, 2014)

BC Youth in Care Event (June 2014)

British Columbia Government and Service Employees Union Forum on Victoria Youth Custody Services Centre (May 2014)

Broadway Youth Resource Centre Winterfest (December, 2014)

Burnaby Youth Custody Services Resource Day (June, 2014)

Child and Youth in Care Awards (MCFD) (June, 2014)

Child Health Initiatives Limiting Disability Through Leisure – Child Leisure Net Forum (Dec, 2014)

Circle of Partners Gathering - Call to Action to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls (February 2015)

Community Living BC Transitioning Youth Conference (May, 2014)

Community Mental Health - Time to Act Meeting and Discussion (May, 2014)

Ending Violence Association of BC Domestic Violence Symposium (November 2014)

Evening of Champions and Hope and Health Soccer Clinics for Coast Salish Children in Care (July, 2014)

Family Support Institute Training Weekend (April, 2014)

First Call Fundraiser (February, 2015)

First Nations Rights: Justice For Children Public Forum (January, 2015)

First Nations Steering Committee Conference on Aboriginal Education (December, 2014)

Gathering Our Voices Aboriginal Youth Conference (March, 2015)

Gathering Our Wisdom Best Practices Forum (May, 2014)

Hulitan Community Services – Journeys of the Heart Event (June, 2014)

Health and Well-being in Children, Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities Conference (October, 2014)

Hiiye"yu Lelum House of Friendship Community Event (Duncan) (July, 2014)

Inclusion BC Conference (June, 2014)

Indigenous Perspective Society's 20th Year of Service Celebration (May, 2014)

Joining Together - An International Conference on Child Maltreatment (May, 2014)

McCreary Centre Annual General Meeting (November, 2015)

Métis Family Services Memorandum of Understanding Signing (June, 2014)

Métis Nation Annual General Meeting (September, 2014)

Middle Childhood Learning Summit (April, 2014)

Moosehide Campaign – Annual Gathering of Men and National Fast (February, 2015)

National Aboriginal Day Festival (Langford) (June, 2014)

National Aboriginal Day Festival (Prince George) (June, 2014)

National Biennial Conference on Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (April, 2014)

Parent Support Services Annual General Meeting (October, 2014)

Phoenix Human Services Open House (April, 2014)

Powell River Association for Community Living Conference (October, 2014)

Prince George Urban Aboriginal Justice Society Open House (December, 2014)

Ray Cam Cooperative: Reconciliation in Action Community Event (June, 2014)

San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment (January, 2015)

Society for Children & Youth of BC 40th Anniversary Open House (November, 2014)

Spirit of the Peace Pow Wow (June, 2014)

Take Back the Night Community Fair - Prince George (September 2014)

30th Colloquium with MCFD, Chilliwack Child and Youth Committee, Elizabeth Fry, University of Fraser Valley - "Children with Parents Involved in the Justice System" (October 24, 2014)

Transitions/Post-Secondary Conference (April, 2014)

University of Victoria Graduate and Honours Student Presentations (April, 2014)

UNICEF Children's Observatory Round Table and Dialogue (October, 2014)

Urban Native Youth Association Staff Development, Team Building, Wellness Day (August, 2014)

Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner (October, 2014)

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Anniversary (June, 2014)

Vancouver Aboriginal Policing Centre – Legal Aid Fair (September, 2014)

Vancouver Foundation - Fostering Change Launch Event (December, 2014)

Vancouver Foundation Fresh Voices Forum – Insights of Immigrant and Refugee Youth (December, 2014)

Vancouver Foundation – Supporting Wellness Through Transitions Conference (June, 2014)

Youth and Family Consensus Conference (May, 2014)

Meetings

Child-, Youth- and Young Adult-Serving Organizations

Advisory Committee on Children and Youth with Special Needs

Aunt Leah's Place

BC Association for Child Development and Intervention

BC Association of Social Workers

Boys and Girls Club Victoria

Broadway Youth Resource Centre

Burnaby Youth Custody Centre

Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative

Child Health BC/Provincial Health Officer Advisory Committee

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

Child Welfare League of Canada

Community Living BC

Equitas

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness

Intimate Partner Violence Impacts Research Team

Kids Help Phone

Lower Mainland Mental Health Needs Committee

McCreary Centre Society

Mary Manning Centre

Mid-Town Youth Services Meeting Vancouver

Ontario Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth

Provincial Health Services Authority

Public Guardian and Trustee

Sea to Sky Community Services

Sexual Abuse Intervention Program

Society for Children & Youth of BC

Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Foundation

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter

YWCA Crabtree Corner

Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations

Carrier Sekani Family Services Foster Parents

First Nations Education Steering Committee

First Nations Health Authority

First Nations Health Council

First Nations Summit

Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Haida Child and Family Services Society

Heiltsuk Gvi'ilas Community Justice Program

Heiltsuk Kaxla Child and Family Service Program

Huu-ay-aht First Nation Executive Council

Indigenous Perspectives Society

K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners

Kwumut Lelum Child and Family Services Society

Métis Family Services

Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia

Nisga'a Family and Child Services

Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council/Fraser Thompson Indian Services Society

Nlha'7kapmx Child and Family Services Society

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Northwest Inter-Nation Family and Community Services Society

Partnership Forum

Pauquachin First Nation

Prince George Aboriginal Child and Family Commission

Scw'exmx Child and Family Services Society

Secwepemc Child and Family Services Agency

Tsawwassen First Nation

Tsilhqot'in National Government

Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs - Chiefs Councils

Urban Native Youth Association

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society

Government Organizations

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

BC Aboriginal Youth Internship Program

BC Coroners Service

BC Healthy Connections Project Provincial Advisory Committee

B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development

B.C. Ministry of Education

B.C. Ministry of Health

B.C. Ministry of Finance

B.C. Ministry of Justice

B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

B.C. Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizen's Services

City of Surrey

City of Vancouver

Interior Health Authority

Manitoba Child and Youth Advocate Office

Members of Her Majesty's Official Opposition

Office of the Auditor General

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Prince George Youth Custody Centre Youth Supervisor Training

Provincial Health Officer

Saskatchewan Child and Youth Advocate Office

Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights

Status of Women Canada

Academic Organizations

Consortium of United Kingdom Education, Social Work, Social Policy Researchers (hosted by University of British Columbia)

University of Victoria

Other

British Columbia Government and Service Employees Union

British Columbia Medical Association

British Columbia Teachers Federation

Canadian Red Cross

Chief Matthews Elementary

Chilliwack Court

Delegation of Senior Officials of the Government of Vietnam

Graham Boeckh Foundation

Office of the Chief Judge – Provincial Court

Ray Cam Cooperative Centre

RCMP

Skidegate Health Centre

Thinkfirst Canada

Speaking Engagements

Child-, Youth- and Young Adult-Serving Organizations

Adoption Council of Canada

Axis Family Resources

BC Centre for Ability

Child Welfare League of Canada

Community Inclusion Month Media Event

Collaborative Planning Day for Children and Youth Mental Health & Addictions Services

Ending Violence Association of BC

Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks Steering Committee Meetings

Interior Community Services Foster Parents

Mary Manning Centre

Mental Health & Addictions at Northern Health Youth Services

San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment

6th National Biennial Conference on Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Surrey Teachers Professional Development Day – Anti-Poverty

Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee

Victoria Women's Transition House Annual General Meeting

YMCA Crabtree - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

YMCA Power of Giving Event

YWCA Young Mother's Group

Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations

First Nations Health Council

Indigenous Perspectives Society

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society

Government Organizations

Blue Ribbon Panel on Crime Reduction

Burnaby Youth Custody Centre

Community Living BC (Terrace)

Federation Social Services - Fraser Region

Legislative Intern Program

MCFD Complaint Specialists

Mental Health Needs Committee (Lower Mainland)

Prince George Youth Custody Centre

Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights

Academic Organizations

Canadian Federation of University Women

Douglas College Ryerson University Conference

University of British Columbia Faculty of Law

University of British Columbia Social Work Class

University of Victoria Social Work Class

University of Victoria School of Child and Youth Care Doctoral Group

Vancouver Island University Child and Youth Care Class

Other

Aunt Leah's Place

BC Principals' and Vice Principals' Association

BC Association of Social Workers

Board Voice Society

British Columbia Government and Service Employees Union

Victoria Community Social Planning Council

"E" Division RCMP Crime Prevention Services, Youth Strategies

Fall 2014 Justice Summit

First Call BC

Open House at the Representative for Children and Youth Burnaby Office

Open House at the Representative for Children and Youth Prince George Office

Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre

RCMP Domestic Violence Training

RCMP Workshop on Youth Mental Health-Suicide Awareness

YMCA Power of Giving

Vancouver Foundation – Fresh Voices Forum

Zonta Club of Nanaimo

Youth Workshops

Ayas Men Men Squamish Nation Child and Family Services (North Vancouver)

Burnaby Youth Custody Centre (Burnaby)

Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks Steering Committee Meetings (Squamish)

Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services (Abbotsford)

Gathering Our Voices (Prince George)

Gitxsan Child and Family Services (Hazelton)

Haida Child and Family Services/Haida Health Services Youth Program (Skidgate and Old Massett)

Heiltsuk Kaxla Child and Family Service Program/ Bella Bella Community School (Bella Bella)

Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Child and Family Services (Cranbrook)

Kwumut Lelum Child and Family Services Society (Nanaimo)

Lalum'utul'smun'eem Child and Family Services (Duncan)

Nezul Be Hanuyeh Child and Family Services/ Carrier Sekani Family Services (Prince George)

Northwest Inter-Nation Family and Community Services Society/Nisga'a Child and Family Services (Terrace)

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Usma Family and Child Services (Port Alberni)

Scw'exmx Child and Family Services Society/ Secwepemc Child and Family Services Agency/ Nlha'7kapmx Child and Family Services Society (Kamloops)

Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services/NIL/TU,O Child and Family Services Society (Victoria)

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

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REPRESENTATIVE FOR
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